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—Francis Russell

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—James Rorty

"Politics"—Still a Dirty Word
—Maurice Klain

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—Irving Ferman

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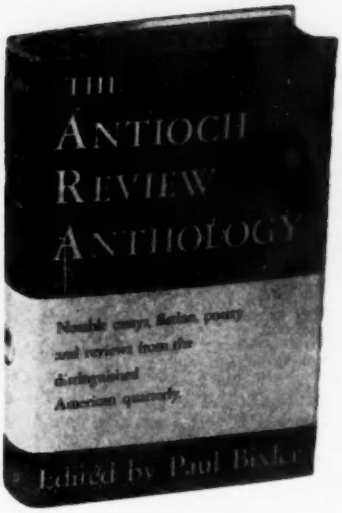

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Editor's Shop Talk

A quarterly journal concerned with with current affairs faces a certain publishing problem in timing. In some areas the risk of an article's becoming irrelevant or outdated may be considerable.

With a quarterly there may be a gap between acceptance and publication of anywhere from two to six months. The *Antioch Review* attempts to avoid the academic and the antiquarian; but in seeking the current and the vital, it is hedged in also by the future. The problem for our authors (and editors) is how to be "safe" from uncertain events in the period of several months between preparation of an article and its reading, or, put more plainly, how to be relevant for an extended time without looking foolish.

Our problem appears at its peak in a plan we have to publish an issue on politics next summer or fall. The events of a Presidential year make the subject exciting but increase the variables. A current question, whether the President will run again or not, will be decided before it becomes troublesome. But other events and conditions will not—the decisions of each party convention, the shape of the American economy, events abroad, the state of public opinion. If these are multiplied by the play of personalities, what topics and their treatment seem possible?

At this moment, taking our pen in our teeth, we see articles in the following:

1. The Real (Domestic) Issues in 1956. What are they and how squarely do the parties meet them? How do the parties differ in their stance? (Historical background has some relevance here.)

2. Bipartisanship in Foreign Affairs. Under what conditions does it seem feasible? What can it do to democratic government — for example, the problem of the "loyal opposition," whose task it is to watch the watchman? How is the concept being used or misused?

3. Our Party System. What are the interests and the composition of the parties in 1956? Put this against the background of the past and in anticipation of the future — for instance, is there likelihood of realignment in the near future?

4. The Quality of Political Leadership. What are the ideal attributes of an American President, his chief administrators, his staff? Where does "the man" come in and "the Presidency" as an institution play its part?

5. Voting Behavior. How does the American voter make up his mind? How *ought* he to make it up? If there are discrepancies, how does this affect democratic assumptions?

That's the way it stands now, much too briefly. The difficulty will be to fill in the outline. P.B.

The Tragedy in Dedham:

A Retrospect of the Sacco-Vanzetti Trial

By FRANCIS RUSSELL

THE CASE OF SACCO AND VANZETTI, which began as the prosecution for a commonplace if brutal murder, developed gradually into one of the world's great trials. In the end it was much more than a trial. It became one of those events that divide a society. Although the issues that it raised have been overlaid by war and political events, they never wholly die. Even today middle-aged men and women hearing by some chance the names Sacco and Vanzetti still find themselves stirred by the passion and violence of their younger days. Sacco and Vanzetti have become a symbol, and like all symbols the meaning varies with those who adopt it.

I myself do not have any memory of the 1921 trial, I then being in the fifth grade of the Boston public schools, but I do remember from my seventeenth year the agitation and excitement of those summer weeks in 1927 preceding the two men's execution. The day they were to die I took the elevated in to Boston and spent the better part of the afternoon walking over Beacon Hill and across the Common in the August sunshine. In spite of the tranquillity of the weather the atmosphere was tense. Police were everywhere, hard-faced and angry, some of them carrying rifles—a thing I had never seen before. Pickets with placards marched up and down before the Bulfinch façade of the State House. Periodically the police carted groups of them away in a patrol wagon to the Joy Street Station. Almost at once their places were filled by others. Busses kept arriving from New York hung with

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For the past seven months FRANCIS RUSSELL has been working on a play about Sacco and Vanzetti, the action taking place in the courtroom at Dedham and most of the dialogue being abstracted from the trial transcript. The present article is a by-product of Mr. Russell's work on the play, which is so constructed as to leave the verdict up to the audience. Mr. Russell's "The Coming of the Jews" appeared in the Spring (1955) issue.

signs announcing that "Sacco and Vanzetti Must Not Die!" and trailing red paper streamers. As the busses pulled into Park Street those inside began to sing "The Red Flag." They looked like foreigners, most of them. I did not like their looks. Crossing Boston Common on that hot afternoon I sensed in myself the hostility of the bourgeois world towards these two men. In spite of any pickets and red-streamered busses from New York, I knew that they were going to die that night. As I walked under the faintly scented lindens on the Tremont Street side of the Frog Pond I felt a sense of oneness with the community that was asserting itself. I was glad Sacco and Vanzetti were going to die.

It never occurred to me that the two men might be innocent. In the shabby-genteel little private school I went to in Roxbury none of the masters would have dreamed of such a thing. We took our opinions from them and from our parents. The father of one of my classmates was Court Recorder of Massachusetts. He had written a much-approved pamphlet, *Sacco and Vanzetti in the Scales of Justice*, in which he had demonstrated the quasi-divine status of Massachusetts justice, a status which made even the appointment of the Lowell Committee to investigate the case a reflection on the Commonwealth's judicial system. According to the Recorder that system, so sanctified by the past, could not err. Such a conservative position was common enough in Massachusetts then. Nor did it change. Thirty years later the Recorder still listed his pamphlet in the American *Who's Who* as his single literary accomplishment.

By and large one's view of the case depended on one's status in the community. If one were middle-class and Republican and read the *Herald* mornings and the *Transcript* nights one thought Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty. Any latent doubts subsided after President Lowell of Harvard issued his report. But if one were a university liberal one tended to think the trial unfair, and if one read the *Nation* or *New Republic* one was sure they were innocent.

My father was a lawyer and a Republican. He believed the two men guilty, not from any particular study of the trial itself but because of his acquaintance with Captain Van Amburgh, a ballistics expert who testified at the trial. Captain Van Amburgh through laboratory examinations was certain that one of the recovered murder bullets had been fired from Sacco's gun. This convinced my father, although—as

it came out later—it never convinced Captain Proctor of the State Police.

My Aunt Amy, who was a social worker and lived in the Elizabeth Peabody House, was equally convinced of the two men's innocence. This again was not from studying the evidence—I don't think Aunt Amy did anything more than glance at Professor Frankfurter's book—but that was the way one had to feel if one were a social worker. Nobody could have continued to stay at the Elizabeth Peabody House who felt otherwise—not that such a person would ever have been there in the first place. One of the proud moments of Aunt Amy's life was when she was arrested for picketing the State House and taken away in the patrol wagon. I think she was almost disappointed that the policeman who arrested her was so courteous about it.

I can remember Sundays after dinner when my father and Aunt Amy would get to wrangling about the case, not arguing from logic but merely making mutually contradictory statements. One afternoon Aunt Amy struck the table and called my father a liar. Neither one of them was the least bit interested in the other's point of view. After the publication of the Lowell Report my father maintained that Frankfurter should have resigned from the Harvard Law School. Aunt Amy's high opinion of the Lowells was never quite the same again.

I don't know when my views about Sacco and Vanzetti changed. It must have been some time in the '30's, when I happened to read their letters. Those letters just weren't compatible with the sordid and mercenary Braintree murders. As to the question of who were the murderers if Sacco and Vanzetti were not, I found that answered later in a book by one of their counsel, Herbert B. Ehrmann's *The Untried Case*, which seemed to prove conclusively enough that the men who did the killing were from the Morelli Gang of Providence. If one accepted that explanation, reinforced by more factual evidence as time went on, everything fitted together even to the number of men involved. For all witnesses agreed that there were five men in the murder car, although the prosecution never attempted to account for more than two. One of the Morellis looked enough like Sacco to have been his brother.

Dedham, where the trial took place, is one of those quiet backwaters that span the decades without ever causing much comment until suddenly, and much to the regret of the townspeople, it is made

known by the event. For the most part it is a mill town stretched along the loops of the Charles River. But the older section near the High—not Main—Street is a well-preserved relic of the Colonial past. This High Street, overarched by elms, has its spacious frame houses of the mid-eighteenth century and its later and more grandiloquent mansions of the century's end. It has two graceful white meeting houses and a Victorian granite Episcopal church with an English-type churchyard where deans and a bishop lie buried. The Courthouse on the High Street, built in 1827, is a stone building with massive Greek-revival columns. Its Roman-style dome, soberly proportioned to the columns, is the most characteristic object in Dedham. From the flat country beyond the river it looms above the elms, flanked by the meeting house spires, a symbol of authority.

I have seen its silhouette from across the marshes in all seasons of the year. That stretch of bogland beyond U.S. One, those miles of button bush and hardhack and speckled alder converge on the horizon line of the Courthouse dome. Almost always when I see the great dome so secure above the peaceful community I find myself thinking back to the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Its ghost still seems to linger over the Courthouse and the High Street, a tangible presence, whatever one's feelings may be about it.

I felt that presence even more keenly in 1953, 32 years after the trial, when I was called on to serve for a month as a juror in that domed Courthouse, in the same aloof panelled room where Sacco and Vanzetti were tried and found guilty and, after all the exceptions and delays, were sentenced to death six years later.

Scarcely a day of that month passed but there was some reference to the Sacco-Vanzetti Trial. In Dedham, at least, there were no longer any feelings of partisanship about it. Yet everyone sensed somehow that for the town it had been the climactic event.

The old sheriff in his blue serge cutaway with the large brass buttons had served there for forty years. He had been deputy sheriff in the first World War, and was made sheriff the year before the Sacco-Vanzetti Trial. Sometimes during the long lunch hour one of us would ask about the trial and he would reminisce. All his loyalty and most of his life were bound up with the Dedham Court. The law revealed there was majestically certain. I don't think he ever entertained the idea it might err, nor do I think his mind ever questioned the

Sacco-Vanzetti decision. A due process of law was final. To think otherwise would be to challenge the very things that had become part of him—his brass buttons, his white wand of office with the blue state seal on it. His office did not however keep him from having personal feelings apart from the law. He had come to like Sacco and Vanzetti. "They were good boys," he told us. "I knew Nick best, but they were both good boys. Never any trouble in jail. Now those Millens—you remember them? They were really bad eggs. You had to keep your eye on them every minute."

Sometimes at the end of the afternoon session he would take a few of us through the jail two streets away, and after showing us the reception hall and the dining room and the laundry would always point out the cells of Sacco and Vanzetti. "I was in the court," he told us one afternoon as we stood in front of the barred door, "that day when Judge Thayer sentenced them. Vanzetti made his speech first, that long speech—maybe you heard about it. And all the time he was talking Judge Thayer just sat there with his chin in his hand looking down at his desk. Never moved. But when Vanzetti finished, then he let him have it."

Just outside the courtroom in the tesselated corridor we would pass the prisoners' cage, used in all Massachusetts murder trials. In this cage the defendants Sacco and Vanzetti sat, as have all other Norfolk County defendants. The cage has often been mentioned in the literature of the case, as if the two men had been exhibited in court like monkeys in a zoo. But in spite of its name the cage is no cage at all. It is a topless enclosure of woven metal lattice about three feet high in front rising to five feet in the back. Inside is a bench, at either end are latched doors. Except for its symbolism there is nothing very formidable about it.

I was on a civil jury. Most of our cases concerned car accidents and personal injuries. One of our last cases, a minor one involving a woman who had cut her leg in the door of a car, made the courtroom buzz as it began. The lawyer for the plaintiff seemed to be the cause of it, for as soon as he appeared there was a wave of whispering. Even the clerk came over to the rail and muttered something quickly to our foreman. The lawyer was a portly man in his sixties or seventies, with a manner so assured that it was almost contemptuous. He was baldish, his face florid, with the flesh sagging under the cheeks. Behind

his rimless spectacles his pale-blue eyes watered. He was dressed with the conservatism of a Boston banker, a hard-woven worsted suit cut in characteristic pear-shaped style. His shoes were of Scotch grain leather, he had a handkerchief tucked in his sleeve, and there were several club seals on his gold watch-chain. When he spoke his voice was upper-class Bostonian, that elastic prolongation of the vowel sounds that has come to be known as the Harvard accent. As soon as he opened his argument he lapsed into Victorian rhetoric.

The clerk's remark was passed along the jury box, the man next to me nudged my elbow. "That's Katzmann," he said, "the fellow that got Sacco and Vanzetti."

In his pear-shaped suit he seemed the culmination of the ghosts of the month. There he was again, in Judge Webster Thayer's old courtroom, at the scene of his triumph of a generation before. As I watched him facing us, spinning polysyllabic phrases out of nothing, I tried to form an impression of him divorced altogether from the Sacco-Vanzetti case. If I had seen him only at that moment, I should have thought him empty and pompous, his smugness derived from the fact that he was a Mayflower descendant (as in spite of his name I believe he was). But I should also have admitted his basic honesty. He died the following year.

Some months later I talked with a judge who had known Katzmann. When I told him about Dedham he asked me my opinion of the man. I said he was verbose, third-rate, not wholly grammatical. He laughed. "That describes most of us lawyers," he said. "As for Katzmann, he was average—an average district attorney, a little tricky like most of them, but no worse than most out to get a conviction. He thought Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty. I'm sure he never changed his mind."

"What did you think of the trial?" I asked him.

"I don't think the trial was fair. Whether they were guilty or not, I don't think it was fair. Judge Thayer was prejudiced—although like Katzmann, I grant you, he thought they were guilty, guilty of murder and not of just being reds."

II

It does not seem to me today that any reasonable-minded person reading over the literature of the Sacco-Vanzetti case could come to

any other conclusion than that the two men were innocent.[1] There are aspects of the case that are still inexplicable—but these men were not the stuff of criminals, neither in their natures nor their habits nor even their practical experience. "The dry bones still rattle," Heywood Broun wrote nine years after their execution. They no longer rattle. The case has become part of history. And since then we have become more used to innocent people being condemned. A new generation is scarcely aware of them, the cause they thought they died for is no cause. One finds Vanzetti's noble last address to the court in several anthologies: "If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph." But the words were not prophetic after all.

A third of a century has passed since the trial. Judge Thayer, Katzmann, President Lowell, and most of the jurors and witnesses are dead. What remains out of this shadowed past? Two men were executed for a crime they did not commit. Beyond all partisanship, how could it have been avoided?

The two sides became irreconcilable. One side felt, as did the Court Recorder in his pamphlet, that anything less than the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti would undermine the Massachusetts judiciary. The other side demanded that the whole proceedings of Judge Thayer's court be repudiated. There should have been some middle way out, some face-saving formula that would at least have pacified if not contented the Recorder and his kind and yet given the men their lives. Whatever the defense's private opinion of Judge Thayer, it would have been better to have said less about him and concentrated on the subsequently discovered evidence. That this evidence, chiefly concerning the Morelli gang, changed nothing was pre-eminently the responsibility of President Lowell. Working as he did in private with his committee, unhampered by strict rules of legal evidence, he had the opportunity to examine all the facts. A word from him, an indirect indication, and Governor Fuller would have stayed the death sentence and ordered a new trial. The Lowell Report is incomprehensible—unless

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[1]The most adequate book on Sacco and Vanzetti, covering the case from every aspect, is the most recent, *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti*, by G. Louis Joughin and Edmund M. Morgan (Harcourt, Brace, 1948). It is comprehensive, fair to both sides, and lets the reader draw his own conclusions.

it was that Lowell, the trained and objective historian, took the point of view of a minor Court Recorder.

Governor Fuller, of course, took his cue from the report. If he, the parvenu, had not been so in awe of Lowell and the Back Bay ascendancy he represented, perhaps he would have acted otherwise. His contact with Sacco and Vanzetti is said to have been friendly. Of all the principals he is the only one still alive.

Once or twice a year going into the State Street Trust building I see Fuller. The doorman sees him first and swings the door open with a ringing "Good morning, Governor." I slip through in the eddy. The old politician billows ahead of me under full sail. Self-esteem carries him along like a favoring wind. His is the pride of manner that has reached its goal. An Alger story of the new century. From a Malden bicycle shop to the head of the Packard agency for New England when Packard was the Rolls Royce of America. A mansion on the water side of Beacon Street hung with Gainsboroughs and Romneys and Raeburns. That was the first stage. Then the governorship. And when Packard slipped in the depression, the ex-Governor sensed the moment of ebb and shifted to Cadillac.

There is a cragginess to his features in age. More and more he comes to resemble the Back Bay Brahmins he has so much admired. It is protocol still to address him as "Governor." I suppose Sacco and Vanzetti, those men whose hands he shook so long ago in the death cells, have become blurred impressions, half-forgotten, overlaid by eighteenth-century paintings and the tail-fins of Cadillacs. "Our reputation is your protection," says the Governor's used car "ad." Yet I can never see him swinging into the State Street Trust but I think of his role in the trial.

III

Public opinion in Massachusetts—however that nebulous entity can be defined—was against Sacco and Vanzetti. To the community they were two murderers who had been given a fair trial and every opportunity for appeal afterward. The whole thing had gone on for much too long. Radicals and anarchists and Communists were trying to use the case as a lever to pry apart the foundations of law and order. But Massachusetts was not going to be dictated to by such people. There might be demonstrations in front of American embassies

throughout the world, there might be more bombs planted in the houses of those concerned—as had already happened to Judge Thayer and one of the jurors. Nothing like that was going to change the course of justice. Conservative opinion more and more adopted the point of view that Sacco and Vanzetti had become a challenge to society that could be answered only by their deaths. This view, though it prevailed judicially, never did have a literate apologia.

Literary talent was the forte of the other side. That side consisted of the literary left, radicals, liberals, Communists, woolly well-meaning progressives like my Aunt Amy, plus a large scattering of people who could not be labelled politically but whose sense of justice had been outraged. Some of these latter were starched conservatives. The crystallized view of the opposition was that Sacco and Vanzetti were the victims of a malignant conspiracy. Neither judge nor district attorney had really believed them guilty of murder. The trial was a put-up job to get rid of two troublesome agitators.

For the Communists—to whom this case gave their first opportunity for a mass appeal—Sacco and Vanzetti were martyrs of the proletariat, murdered by reactionaries trying to preserve an unjust social order. As Eugene Lyons wrote in his book, *The Life and Death of Sacco and Vanzetti*: "They were sacrificed to the basic fears of capitalist society. They died for the working class of the world."

Seen from this point of view two alien reds could expect no justice from a Massachusetts court or a Dedham jury. That jury had obviously not debated long over the case, for it took them only five hours to bring in their verdict.

During my month in Dedham I couldn't help but wonder about that earlier jury. Drawn in much the same way that we were, they couldn't have been so very different from ourselves. And what were we? Some middle-class, some working-class, a few of us stupid, a few opinionated, but most of us reasonable enough to weigh an issue. At least we tried to overcome our prejudices, we felt it on our conscience that we should be fair. The jury I sat on would have been prejudiced against reds, but they would not have convicted a Communist on a capital charge because of his political beliefs. It didn't seem to me the Sacco-Vanzetti jury could have been otherwise. Granted even that the foreman was prejudiced, there would have been some of the others who would have stood out against injustice. I felt sure that when the jury

decided that Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty, it was because they were convinced that they were guilty of murder.

Thinking of the great trial I found myself wondering how I should have voted if I had been on the Sacco-Vanzetti jury, knowing little or nothing of the background of the case but merely faced with what was offered me day after day in six weeks of testimony. As soon as I had the time I went back to the transcript of the trial itself. If there was any answer to this question, it would be there.

There was much that the transcript could not offer—the actuality of the past moment, the atmosphere of the court with its tensions, the appearance of the witnesses and the defendants, the subtleties that could be gathered from a tone of voice but could not be preserved in black and white. Yet the substance, the prime matter of the trial endured, each word spoken during that six weeks pressed and dried between the now yellowing pages. Over 2,000 pages of testimony faced me, with the repetitions, the irrelevancies, the long-drawn-out legal impasses that I had become all too familiar with as a juror—and then the sudden revelation of the living fact from the dead record. One hundred and sixty-seven witnesses there were, including the ballistics experts.

Through the long days of another summer I occupied myself with this inchoate mass that gradually took shape and form as I read. I tried to disavow any preconceptions, to imagine myself in the jury box at Dedham occupied solely with the question of whether two men murdered two other men, and knowing no more about it in advance than the evidence offered. How should I have judged?

I knew one thing anyway—that I should have disregarded the experts. My month had taught me that. Experts cancelled each other out as the paid bias of either side, and a jury then decided on other grounds. The real grounds in this case were the half dozen or so witnesses who identified Sacco—and to a lesser extent Vanzetti—as being at or near the scene of the murder on that April day. In opposition to them were an equal number of witnesses who testified that these two were not the men. It was a question finally of which group to believe. Every witness who saw the get-away car testified there were five men in it. The weakest part of the Commonwealth's case was that it made no effort to account for the remaining three, as

Ehrmann did in his book. And the prosecution never did establish an adequate motive for the crime.

On the other hand Sacco and Vanzetti were both armed the night the police picked them up, Sacco with a revolver of the type that fired the murder bullet, Vanzetti with one that might have been taken from the murdered paymaster. This was the most damaging fact against them.

Sacco maintained that he had put his revolver in his pocket that afternoon and forgotten about it, Vanzetti said that he carried his for protection. Both statements may have been true. Often the lame excuse is really the truthful one. Yet here were two men, philosophical anarchists, who maintained that the use of force was never justified, not even for the advancement of their beliefs. Because of these essentially quietist beliefs, this trust that when the oppressive hand of government was removed men would be free and happy, they trusted no government. With the war they became fugitives from military service. Their philosophy denied the use of force, even for self-protection (as it must). Yet when they were picked up, almost by accident, they had on them the weapons of force. If they had not been armed the chances are that they would never have come to trial.

The trial may well have been more unfair than seems apparent in the record. There the most glaring fault is the district attorney's harrying interrogation of the two men as to their beliefs, their lack of patriotism and their reasons for running away to avoid the draft. That the judge allowed such questioning to go on was outrageous.

Its impropriety stares out of the printed page. Here certainly was error, yet I cannot believe that this was primary in the jury's verdict. The judge's charge, that Professor Frankfurter so condemned in his book, seems reasonable enough in cold print. Reading it over twice I could not take exception to it.

I was finally left with the feeling that if I had been on the original jury, and heard the evidence that was placed before those men I should probably have voted with the others. Yet I was not really certain.

IV

Looking back at it now over a lapse of years the case of Sacco and Vanzetti becomes a tragedy in the classical sense. It was no melo-

drama, as many have seen it, with good neatly divided from evil. Katzmann was as sharp as most district attorneys out for a conviction, a limited man but not a bad one. Judge Thayer could not hide the bias of his obsessions off the bench. He was indiscreet and he was weak, but he made an effort to conduct the trial fairly. Both he and Katzmann believed to their dying day that Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty.

It was not a conspiracy of evil men against noble men, as Maxwell Anderson saw it in his theatrical *Gods of the Lightning*. There was something more, something deeper and more embracing than all the literature about the case. It was in fact fate that was the mover behind the events at the Dedham Courthouse in the spring of 1921. And it was fate in the ironic Greek sense, dwarfing all the participants, ending in inexorable disaster.

Sacco and Vanzetti were figures of Greek tragedy, the doomed king's son become in modern dress two Italian workmen. Fate lurks behind them at each step. Sacco, the regular worker, never misses a day at the factory except that one day of the murder when he goes to Boston for a visa to return to Italy. If he had picked any other day, the factory time-clock would have been his alibi. Without him it is agreed Vanzetti could not have been convicted. But on that one day fate sent him to Boston. Fate gave him his singular resemblance to Joe Morelli. Fate engineered the almost accidental arrest of the two men as they were riding on the Brockton streetcar. But for fate Sacco would have been off to his native country in two weeks.

And as in Greek tragedy the hero condemns himself unknowingly in his own words, is doomed by his own inner weakness, so in the end are Sacco and Vanzetti doomed by theirs. The men of peace go armed. Fate plus human weakness—that is the basis of high tragedy, a tragedy such as theirs that they played out to the end with bravery and dignity. It was a tragedy for everyone concerned with the case, and in the end it is best accepted so, as it was by the Greeks.

The Silent Generation

By Don Gordon

The old ones are listening like birds
For the sound of the morning sun
Or the young trees growing or the leaves
Or the language of roots sturdily spoken
Along the veins of the national earth.

The young men are growing, quiet
As the morning sun, quieter than trees
Or leaves, quietest at the roots
Extended like fingers for food
Or a buried fund of light.

The stones of the words unused,
The stones of the foreign graves,
Lie on the minds of the old:
They are planning for someone
Who does not seem to be there.

Jet-flown into the future
Before they had a past,
The young men know everything
But words. Early the fathers forget
How curt the hour from milk to blood.

A country of silent youth
Is an old man whose sons
Have not come back from war,
An old man dry as an insect
At the end of the napalm summer.

Don Gordon has published two books of poetry, *Statement* and *Civilian Poems*. Recent poems of his have appeared in *Accent*, *The American Scholar*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*.

The Liberal's Responsibility

By IRVING FERMAN

ONE DOES NOT BECOME A LIBERAL by simply taking a particular position, nor even by joining a particular group. Such characterization is meaningless because in its history, the term "liberalism" has been claimed by too many groups of diverse political orientation. In Spain, it has meant anti-clericalism and anti-monarchism. In Italy, it has meant a nationalism concerned with geographic unification. In Germany, it has meant political reform.

In our own Anglo-Saxon orbit, over the swing of the last century, liberalism has packaged beliefs antithetical to each other. In the early nineteenth century, liberalism's creed was freedom from any form of external coercion—governmental, as well as economic and religious. Jefferson in his first inaugural address defined it well:

> A wise and frugal government which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government, and this is necessary to close the circle of felicities.

In sharp contrast to what was Jefferson's ideal, liberalism, by the time of the New Deal, came to mean the use of governmental interference with individual privacy presumably to guarantee the freedom which Jefferson thought could best be preserved by limiting government. Franklin Delano Roosevelt in describing his political support, said:

> The liberal party is a party which believes that, as new conditions and problems arise beyond the power of men and women to meet as individuals, it becomes the duty of the Government itself to find new remedies with

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After serving as a commissioned flyer with the United States Army Air Forces, IRVING FERMAN returned to Harvard University where he took a law degree in 1948, then practiced law for the next four years in New Orleans. Since 1952 he has been Director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union.

> which to meet them. The liberal party insists that the government has the duty to use all its power and resources to meet new problems with new social controls.

A comparison of these words with Jefferson's makes clear the complete swing which the meaning liberalism has taken in a little more than a hundred years. One can hardly define the word in terms of creed and belief. Its 125-year history of change in such meaning precludes this kind of definition.

Yet liberalism through its history has been expressive of a spirit and disposition which can be defined. George Sabine, the political philosopher, refers to its history as expressing

> . . . the moral conviction that intelligence is the core of personality, the distinctively human faculty in man, and the part of him that could not be limited without crippling all his powers. Liberalism was built upon the moral postulate that men have a right to be convinced, to understand and evaluate the demands that are laid on them, and if possible to consent to them.

When his history, then, is finally salted down the liberal has what a writer referred to as a "faith in individuals, faith that can be persuaded by rational means to beliefs compatible with social good." It is this predisposition plus the belief that "government has the duty to use all its power and resources to meet new problems with new social controls" that defines the mid-twentieth-century liberal. It is the deep-seated respect for human personality, however, that is most fundamental.

And, in terms of such attitude or predisposition, the identifying characteristic of this point of view, liberals cut across all party lines and can be found in all political groups ranging from Americans for Democratic Action to the Republican Party. One cannot survey the political spectrum and precisely determine the point—let us say, left of the Republicans and right of the Socialists—where the liberals can be found. The liberal has faith in humanity. He sees in human development the promise of history. He sees in the reasoning ability of the common man the basis for all that is good to come.

In a large sense, our democratic institutions are the political expressions of the liberal attitude. The role of the popular will, the power of the legislature, the electoral system, the concept of due process, all point to a basic assumption that ultimate good lies in the common man.

The conservative, on the other hand, does not have this complete faith. He is generally distrustful of what can be expected of people, if we bank too much on their reasoning abilities. Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century conservative, expressed this as follows:

> We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason: because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank of capital of nations and of ages.

The truly impressive fact is that in the conservative as well as the liberal there is a deep respect for the individual. Conservatism, particularly within its Anglo-Saxon meaning, comes by this respect because of its devotion to tradition, much of which treats the individual with solemnity and dignity.

It is this respect which led a staunch conservative like Robert A. Taft to oppose Truman's attempt to break a railroad strike in 1946 by the exercise of plenary powers, and to criticize the application of *ex post facto* law in the Nuremburg trials. It is this devotion to our heritage that led one of the first supporters of the ultraconservative Liberty League, John W. Davis, to represent without fee Robert W. Oppenheimer, and also to oppose several years ago the proposed Mundt-Nixon Bill, a forerunner to the Internal Security Act of 1950.

As a matter of political psychology, then, rather than political thinking, the antagonist of the liberal is not really the conservative. The antiliberal is the one who resorts to the hyperbole, the misrepresentation, and the smear to short-cut the rational capacity in man in order to achieve a quick political result. He is the one who because of feelings of desperation and pessimism about the common man tends to become doctrinaire, dictatorial, magisterial, oracular, and authoritarian. And such a person is likewise the antagonist of the conservative.

A depressing fact is that too many people of liberal disposition are adopting the mood of their opposites. This has added to an already existing hysteric quality in our political polemics that can do sharp violence to our liberty, regardless of the direction our political tides may take.

Unfortunately this has happened at a time when the sympathetic emphasis on human personality and its development, which is the core of the liberal's faith, makes his role in our democratic society a vital one. Pressure groups have subjected our political life to conflict-

ing stresses. Their insistence on black and white thinking, their preoccupation with inflated statements has brought about political results often characteristic of anarchy rather than responsible democracy.

We need the individual who views our political chaos with a comprehensiveness denied to others because of his fundamental faith in the power of human beings to solve all their problems. As a liberal he tries to see all men in the light of his own humanity. He does not arithmetize other men. From such a human perspective, he can and does provide us with the conscientious dissent that our democracy requires. He shows us the example of a dissent marked by responsiveness and recognition of the breadth of contemporary problems, rather than a negative dissent marked by violent partisanship.

Our public debate has been perverted by a persistent recourse to sloganeering. For instance, it has become impossible to discuss the problem of public vs. private power without the verbal slugging of "giveaway," "stealaway," and "creeping socialism." Bludgeon and brickbat slogans such as the "Cadillac Crusade," referring to the Eisenhower Administration, or the "Slave Labor Law," referring to Taft-Hartley, are not different in kind from other acts of verbal barbarism such as "Twenty Years of Treason" or the "Acheson-Hiss State Department." These smears of the right and left smear those who use them as much as the persons or parties against whom they are directed.

Too many modern people of more liberal persuasion, however, have lost faith in the ability of men to discern right from wrong. They find it necessary to use tactics which arise from fear that their fellow citizens, because of their presumed inability to think, will do injury to themselves. They are tempted to use the language and the techniques of the extremists, who also lack confidence in the intelligence of the common man.

This blind tendency to fight fire with fire, though unbecoming to a free man, is expressive of a basic trait in social personality under stress. It is only natural to strike back as one has been struck, to give blow for blow, to use any method that comes to hand without a second thought as to its after effect. That is why it is not always possible for the liberal in man to overcome his illiberality just at the time when society requires it the most. One could go on to infer from this that we resign ourselves. Such behavior is in the nature of man. But liberal-

ism, which so influenced the development of our democracy, has always been a challenge to this resignation.

When a person tagging himself as a liberal is confronted with the possibility that the action of a few desperate politicians may result in a galloping hysteria, he is likely to rationalize that it is necessary to play the game that way in order to succeed and simulate the appearance of success. He also claims that things are different when he plays that way, because as a liberal he is humanely motivated.

There is plenty of room for resentment and indignation in our society. We need the motive power of strong feelings to make our form of government work. Citizens must have pressing reasons for action, if they are to participate in and thus maintain our democracy. But to be continuously effective, such passions must function within the basic conception of a free society.

We must not forget that the continuing quality rather than the changing subject matter of public debate is the determining factor in the formation of a climate of opinion in which freedom can flourish. For when violent slogans penetrate our legal and political institutions, they inevitably disrupt the safeguards which guarantee the liberties of individual citizens, whatever their opinions may be.

The liberal tries—if he is a true one—to live with the wisdom that the ages have taught us: a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. Certainly this advice is good politics as well as good ethics.

In our time, in spite of our youth as a people, a position of world responsibility has been thrust upon us by historical events. So many nations have been disorganized by catastrophe and war in the last forty years that we are left with the oldest written Constitution on earth. By the same token we appear to have the most stable political structure in the western world, and this political stability has drawn the hopes of all free men to us. Whether we like it or not we have become the fortress of freedom in an era of widespread vulnerability to the advance of Communism.

Only a few decades ago, on the face of things, we were a nation sufficient unto ourselves. Other peoples quarreled and shot cannons at each other; we were concerned chiefly with ward politics and municipal corruption and trust-busting and agrarian reform. Our ports of

entry were wide open. Immigrants flocked to our country from the four quarters of the earth, seeking peace.

Today we have high taxes and the nagging fear of economic instability; we have continuing defense preparations, on the scale of actual war; our young men are being conscripted—as if we had sunk to the level of a nation of Central Europe in the past century. The strain has created a widespread political neurosis. As free, practical-minded Americans we want to do something about it. We cannot, as individuals, grapple with our enemies abroad. We have permitted politicians, in spite of our better judgment, to lay claim to right what is wrong with the world by pursuing disturbers of the peace at home.

This pursuit has become a galloping hysteria. But the method of checking the resulting hysteria of the witch-hunters by an opposed hysteria of the liberals is ineffective as well as dangerous. One gets weary of swinging at the end of this pendulum from one extreme to another. And one must remember that fighting fire with fire always means fire.

The most serious mistake liberals can make arises from the feeling, among some of them, that good motivations sanctify antiliberal behavior. That assumption violates an essential lesson of history. The method is what always counts in the politics of liberty. Given good motivation and bad method the result is always bad. Liberals must not reduce the area of freedom on the specious pretext of defending it.

The first resolution introduced by Senator Flanders against Senator McCarthy is a case in point. The passion and fury of the anti-McCarthy fight did provoke a trait which tends to bring out the bigoted in us. In its first form, the Flanders' proposal was dangerously authoritarian because it did not provide a hearing for him. The resolution simply assumed, because Flanders thought so, that McCarthy's guilt was proved.

However, it was heartening that a Senator of considerable liberal posture, Wayne Morse, was the first to criticize the censure move by reminding the proponents:

> We have the very precious principle that even if the minority represents only a minority of one, the majesty of American justice will protect him in seeing to it that if he is convicted, he is convicted on the basis of specific charges.

Fortunately, then, the good sense of the majority took hold, and the Watkins Committee was set up to hear specific charges.

It was even more alarming when a liberal Congressman suggested to his fellow legislators in the House of Representatives that a mighty blow could be struck at anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic hate groups if the Post Office banned their materials from the mails. What (though this propaganda happens to be scurrilous) could be more obstructive to the maintenance of a free flow of ideas among responsible citizens? Must liberals, too, fear men who are armed only with words? Is suppression to become a liberal device?

Such a callous attitude toward a basic rule of democracy when dealing with ultra-right wing groups was identical with the insistence of other liberals that the House Un-American Activities Committee should investigate such groups. This insistence resulted in a report issued by the House Un-American Activities Committee during the winter of 1954-55 on these ultra-right, neo-fascistic groups without having afforded them a hearing. The report consisted of inferences drawn from the printed propaganda issued by these groups—inferences that were not confined to what was said in the printed material. It resulted without question in an official intrusion into political associations, in a manner insensitive to due process, where the associations did not border on acts presenting a clear and present danger to our government; and, thus involved an area protected from governmental intervention by the First Amendment. This kind of intrusion is precisely the kind liberals have loudly and validly objected to in recent anti-subversive investigations.

Senator Hubert Humphrey is certainly one of the more outstanding liberal leaders. His surprise move to outlaw membership in the Communist Party, made at the very end of the last session of the 83rd Congress for the sole purpose of political effect, resulted in a most unfortunate piece of legislation. His mechanical effort to checkmate the opposition exploded the idea that the friends of civil liberties can always depend on those that lay claim to being liberals for the defense of our freedom.

During the 1953 Senate debate on tidelands oil, certain liberal Senators unhesitatingly filibustered despite their previous objections to the filibuster device. When a protest was lodged against them for

their inconsistent conduct, they replied, "We would be willing to change the rules today, if the others agree to do it for keeps. But as long as the other boys want this 'sharp knife' on the table, we will use it too."

Many "sharp knives" are available for use in our kind of society. Liberals, to be true to their tradition, must reject the use of them. They cannot evade the essential task of appealing to what is reasonable, though perhaps slow to respond, in man.

The alarmingly growing distrust of the people's power of judgment over the long run is curiously shown in the handling of news by certain sections of the liberal press. There appears to be an urge—perhaps most often unintentional—to foster a defensive hysteria as a bulwark against the threatening designs of bad men.

A typical case occurred at the beginning of 1953. The House Un-American Activities Committee announced that an investigation of Communists in education was planned. This prompted a public debate on academic freedom of which we could well be proud. For several hours in a magnificent give-and-take discussion, the first witness called to testify in the new inquiry, Robert Gorham Davis, responded to basic questions concerning Communists in education. He described his experiences with the disciplined allegiance of Communist teachers to their party in detail, indicating that Communists did little indoctrinating in the classroom, confining their activity to party research assignments, speaking to nonacademic groups, and so on. Davis then suggested that Communists might be allowed to teach in areas unaffected by political theories. Then after being asked by the committee members to name the former Communists of whose identity he was certain, he continued to speak with the same candor and named those whom he knew to be Communists while he was in the Party from 1937 to 1939.

The next day, two leading liberal newspapers in Washington and New York gave top billing in their headlines and leads to the naming of those names. Thus what was the substance of the hearing for several hours, a discussion of questions the public had been debating for some time—Do Communist teachers indoctrinate? Should Communists be allowed to teach?—was not reported by the newspapers. This news emphasis suggested itself as part of the attempt to cast all informers in the stereotype of witch-hunters—in order to sustain the defensive

hysteria. This, despite the fact that there were no well-known names mentioned.

The following day, a rather well-intentioned member of the House Un-American Activities Committee, long sensitive to the criticisms directed against it, said to me, "How can we ever achieve reform in the face of this kind of reporting when the papers professing to be liberal are more interested in catering to, and feeding a counter-hysteria, than reporting what actually happened?"

The temptation for liberals to limit themselves to black and white aspects is great; they, of course, fear that the greys—which are so often more true to life—will not be as effective in influencing public opinion. Because of their faith in human personality, liberals should not be afraid of the influence of political demagogues, and should not meet the overanxiety of extremists with counter-anxiety that is equally harmful.

The *National Review*, a new national weekly of conservative view, recently advertised in the pages of the New York *Times Book Review:*

> To urge a position, vastly different from that of the New York *Times* and other distinguished Liberal periodicals, we are about to publish *National Review*—the first weekly journal of conservative opinion to appear on the American scene in our generation.
>
> We think that the conscientious reader of the New York *Times* will want to check his views against intelligently-stated contrasting views. We don't expect you always to agree with *National Review* but we can promise you the stimulation of honest controversy and civilized debate.

The liberal appreciative of human diversity should welcome the appearance of such a statement and such a journal on the sole ground that honest controversy and responsible debate is the life blood of a working democracy. If these words are carried out in practice, we may well be assisted in avoiding the pitfalls of violent polemical moods evident today.

If the liberal remains fearless and hopeful and retains the optimism that comes from a genuine belief in democracy, it will not be necessary for him to resort to reprehensible methods in dealing with the demagogues. To be sure, this slows him down tactically in his political battles. In a sense, he is always handicapped with the un-

principled. But his handicap must be understood and accepted because it is part of the long victory that is freedom's.

In our life-death struggle with Communist totalitarianism we have a vital decision to make affecting the maintenance of a balance between the interests of the individual and those of our society as a whole. We have to study and define the problem of security so that we can deal with it effectively, and in a manner that will preserve our liberty as well as protect our society. Such wise action in the face of emergency requires strong nerves and the courage to take risks. We need the moral quality of confidence in ourselves as well as skill in distinguishing the large from the small issues of the day.

Consequently, those who write and think and act in the body politic—newspaper editors, teachers, professors, publicists, and politicians—owe a special obligation to our democracy. Theirs is an obligation to deal boldly with conflicting interests and to avoid the temptation of thinking in demonological terms. The spokesmen of our society must bring to our political debates a sense of responsibility and a sense of sobriety.

Upon liberals in particular there is placed a special burden. It is their duty to cherish this responsibility in themselves and remind others of the need for it.

Medici Chapel

By Harry Morris

The man who sculptured like an angel saw
Night as a flaccid woman sliding off
The lid of death. Does night give way in death?
We could use more light; and yet as he saw Night,
There is a sanctuary in the broad
Thigh, the wrinkled belly, the torso turned
To offer full, round, not yet sagging breasts;
And Morning, there across this Renaissance tomb,
Seems not so warm, nor satisfies with youth.

Harry Morris's poem, "Disaster," appeared in our fall, 1954 issue. He will be teaching English next fall at Ohio University.

Requiem for Edward Carrigh

By HYAM PLUTZIK

I

The sudden translation to the bottom of the hill,
To be with the dull stones and the sterile earth
After the bitter climbing of forty-four years.

You who postponed the quiet amenities,
The lazy conversation after lunch,
The cigarette in mid-afternoon, the daydream
When a certain wind came to your window
Out of that young, beautiful sea, the Atlantic.

II

Night. The first night in the earth.
The body settles patiently into eternity.
Time moves, yes, but like glacial ice.
The tireless eyes stare out of the sky, answering nothing,
And the silence is august and terrible.

While we were lost in our petty commerce
Of coming and going (that day a barking dog annoyed us,
A buzzing insect, a lagging clock)
You suddenly left your house, your city and your country,
Traveling in the night, few knowing,
To fight with a dark archangel in a desert.

III

Already there is no one to call to.
The body of Edward is not Edward,
Nor the ashes of Gregory Gregory.
Alexander is no longer Alexander in the earth.

Nothing can be done but something can be said at least.

HYAM PLUTZIK has published widely in a number of poetry magazines and literary reviews, and is the author of a book of poems *Aspects of Proteus* (Harper, 1949). He is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Rochester but is at present on a year's leave under a Ford Fellowship at Yale University.

The Harassed Pocket-Book Publishers

By JAMES RORTY

THE POCKET BOOKS ARE IN TROUBLE. A creeping extralegal censorship threatens to bowdlerize the product and abort the cultural potential of the enterprising popular publishers who, only a little over a decade ago, set out to level the barrier of price that in America had tended to restrict the ownership of books to the well-to-do.

Not all pocket books are good books, of course, either literarily or in point of morals. The production has grown too huge, for by now the trickle of a million and a half pocket books that appeared on newsstands and drug store racks in 1939 has swelled to an annual torrent of over 300,000,000 volumes and 1,200 titles. Carried along on this flood is a percentage of salacious bilge, much of it written to order for a few fly-by-night publishers who exploit the sex obsessions of adolescents and adult psychotics and the loopholes in the laws against obscenity and pornography.

The percentage of this polution is small, however. The vast majority of pocket books sold in this country are either reprints of classics and of contemporary best sellers, both fiction and nonfiction; or they are equally reputable originals, including novels, westerns, mysteries, anthologies of poetry and prose, and service handbooks.

Unfortunately the censors, in applying their vague, shifting, and highly subjective canons of "obscenity"—a concept which the courts are still struggling to make objective and measurable—take little or no account of a writer's motive and intent, or of the total effect of his work. A page or even a paragraph of frank sexual description

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JAMES RORTY, once known as the "last of the muckrakers," has turned recently to the subjects of federal security regulations and censorship. This article is part of a projected book on censorship.

is often enough to cause a book to be banned. Writers as gifted, as honest, and as essentially moralistic as James T. Farrell, William Faulkner, and Edmund Wilson appear regularly on the lists of banned books issued by the National Organization for Decent Literature. Since the verdict of these self-appointed censors is rarely tested in the courts, the damage is frequently serious, alike to writers, to publishers, and to the basic principles of freedom by which a democratic culture lives and grows.

Ostensibly, the NODL lists are issued for the protection of the young. Actually, all age groups are affected when, under pressure of the volunteer censors who are guided by these lists, drugstores and newsstands stop carrying the banned books, and wholesale dealers refuse to distribute them. Large markets may thereby be closed to the pocket-book publisher who in such cases has three choices. He can adjust himself to the censorship, "remainder" his edition, swallow his losses and outrage his author; he can excise or edit the passages that have been objected to and thereby, perhaps, induce the NODL to lift the ban in the next edition of its lists; or occasionally he can seize an opportunity to fight the ban in the courts—in which case he usually wins.

What happens sometimes, however, is that the publisher accepts and co-operates with this extralegal censorship by submitting advance copies of a forthcoming book to the distributor, who in turn gets the approval of a key local censorship organization, like the License and Census Bureau in Detroit. Thus, in effect, a little group of self-appointed censors who are neither writers, critics, lawyers, nor experts in juvenile delinquency become the arbiters of taste and morals for all America.

* * *

It started in Chicago, where the National Organization for Decent Literature was organized in 1937 by a committee of Catholic bishops under the chairmanship of Bishop John F. Noll, of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Their assignment was to plan "a systematic campaign in all dioceses of the United States against the publication and sale of lewd magazine and brochure literature." Direction of this campaign was entrusted to Mr. Thomas J. Fitzgerald, executive director of the Council of Catholic Women of the Chicago Archdiocese. In his testimony

before the Gathings Committee,[1] in December of 1952, Mgr. Fitzgerald explained that according to the NODL code, publications are considered objectionable which

1. Glorify or condone reprehensible characters or reprehensible acts.
2. Contain material offensively "sexy."
3. Feature illicit love.
4. Carry illustrations indecent or suggestive.
5. Advertise wares for the prurient-minded.

Publications which are considered objectionable on one or more of these counts are listed in "Publications Disapproved," a monthly publication of the National Organization for Decent Literature which is distributed by the office of the national Catholic magazine *Our Sunday Visitor* in Huntington, Indiana. By December, 1954 about 20,000 copies of the NODL lists were being printed every month and distributed in every state in the union; also in Canada, Mexico, and Africa. Of this number between 4,000 and 5,000 went to organizations and the remainder to individual subscribers, many of whom, however, were believed to represent organizations. Subscribers to the NODL lists include Junior Chambers of Commerce, drugstores, supermarkets, and correctional institutions.

The censoring group established by Mgr. Fitzgerald consists of a panel of a hundred mothers recruited by the Chicago Council of Catholic Women. Each comic book, magazine, or pocket book is read by five of these mothers. If four of the five consider the publication objectionable it appears in the next monthly issue of "Publications Disapproved." Comic books and magazines are marked "acceptable," "borderline," or objectionable." If two successive issues of a given comic book or magazine are voted "acceptable" the publication is placed on the "approved" list. Publishers who ask why their publications are disapproved are presented with the excerpts that are considered objectionable. This, according to Mgr. Fitzgerald, sometimes

[1]The Select Committee of the House of Representatives on Current Pornographic Materials, of which E. C. Gathings of Arkansas was chairman. The Committee held hearings during the week of December 1 and on December 31 at which over thirty witnesses were heard. On December 31 it issued majority and minority reports.

results in improvement, so that the publication is subsequently placed on the approved list. Pocket books are appraised by the same panel that judges comic books and magazines.

Members of the censoring panel are not required to meet any established qualifications of education or experience. An instruction sheet advises the mothers that "probably in most cases it will not be necessary to read the whole book." In practice, the volunteer censors, whose work load is heavy, do little more than mark the passages they consider objectionable, without attempting to appraise the motive of the author, the literary quality of his work, or its total effect upon the reader. The October, 1954 list of "Publications Disapproved" included James T. Farrell's *A World I Never Made*, *Father and Son*, and *My Days of Anger*; Arthur Koestler's *The Age of Longing*; Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* and *God's Little Acre*; and James Jones' *From Here to Eternity*. At one time or another during the past five years, over 150 titles published by the New American Library of World Literature, one of the oldest and most reputable of the pocket-book reprint houses, have been in trouble with one or more of the multiplying groups of local community censors, most of which utilize the NODL lists.

Although Catholic laymen and lay women, especially the National Council of Catholic Women, have frequently taken the initiative in forming the community organizations which bring pressure on pocket-book dealers and distributors, the NODL's policy has been to involve religious organizations of all faiths, civic groups, parent teacher associations, trade unions, and representatives of the local drugstore and newsstand distributors. A standard set of bylaws is supplied for the use of NODL organizers, and these bylaws are ordinarily adopted with minor modifications. For example, the "Citizens Committee for Better Youth Literature" of Detroit states that its objects are "to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, and community through the medium of good literature; to encourage the publication and discrimination (*sic*) of literature which will contribute to the intellectual, social, cultural and spiritual growth of children and youth; to work actively for elimination from publication and circulation of such literature as may be detrimental to, or have no beneficial value in, the intellectual, social, cultural, or spiritual development of children and youth."

An instruction and procedure sheet issued by the American Council of Catholic Women advises its local ACCW "decency crusaders" to work closely with the pastor of the parish. Every establishment selling comic books, magazines, or pocket books is visited every two weeks by teams of two or three women. The owner of the store is presented with a copy of the NODL list and told that his visitors will be back in two weeks to check the contents of his racks. If the dealer refuses to remove the "disapproved" items, the visitors are instructed not to argue with him but to report his refusal to their pastor.

Newsdealers and drugstore proprietors are asked to sign pledges to co-operate with the censoring organization; those who comply are provided with copies of the monthly NODL lists. In Brooklyn, where in 1955 sixteen "area campaigns" were in progress under the direction of the "Citizens of Brooklyn United for Decent Literature,"[2] dealers have been given store placards which proclaim to the customer their refusal to sell "printed filth." Co-operating dealers are favorably noticed in the parish publications of the Catholic church; those who refuse are subjected to continuing pressure. The National Association of Retail Druggists has co-operated with this crusade since 1948; national and state conventions of druggists have repeatedly passed resolutions condemning "gutterslime periodicals" and "scumic books."

Last spring the Mohawk Valley (New York) Pharmacists Association yielded to the pressure of the NODL and agreed to take from its newsstands some 530 comic books, periodicals and paper-backed volumes. Included in the prohibited reading matter were books by

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[2]The position of this rather typical local committee is set forth by its chairman, Walter F. Loehfelm in a letter to the writer from which the following is quoted: "We are on the positive side of the fence and seek only a friendly and neighborly cooperation with our neighborhood dealer in trying to do something about a highly unsavory situation. . . . This is only one phase of our campaign. We profess no such friendliness with the publishers and distributors of this filth! We feel that they are a disgrace to their country and the decent people, who are trying to live as God-fearing citizens with a proper respect for themselves and their neighbors. . . . They have been warned by a Congressional Committee to clean their house and their answer has been to double their output of obscenity. They have, meanwhile, been too successful in selling the public, and the newsdealer in particular, a bill of goods that we must be careful not to be 'censors' and not violate our precious freedom. They are doing infinitely more by confusing liberty with license to endanger such freedoms. . . ."

Hemingway, Emile Zola, William Faulkner, Lillian Smith and James Jones. Offending works of these authors included *To Have and Have Not*; *Nana*; *Sanctuary*; *Strange Fruit*; and *From Here to Eternity*.

In September, 1955 the Baltimore Pharmacists Association reprinted the NODL "objectionable" list and advised its members not to purchase pocket books so listed. Subsequently two of the major drug chains in the city took the suggested action.

From the beginning, comic books, or that substantial percentage of them that exploit sex and assorted horror and violence, have been the principal target of the National Organization for Decent Literature and its allies and collaborators. But pocket books are distributed through the same retail and wholesale channels and on the same returnable basis as the "scumic books" and the "girlie" magazines. Moreover, pocket-book titles disapproved by the NODL censors are listed in the same monthly publications that are used by local censoring organizations and cooperating dealers to identify and eliminate objectionable periodical literature. Much of this is frankly salacious, has no literary or educational pretensions, and some of it—the comic books—is addressed to the preadolescent group.

Hence the pocket books have suffered to some extent from "guilt by association," a misfortune which they have frequently invited by utilizing sensational titles and the same kind of covers, of mostly bosomy and dishevelled females, which are employed by the publishers of the cheap sex magazines to exploit the lowest common denominator of the commercial market for concupiscence. These covers and titles, moreover, are frequently fraudulent[3] in that they wholly misrepresent both the intent and even the content of the books by serious authors which they are used to advertise. Adolescents seeking sex titillation soon find that they can get it much more directly and in higher concentration from the "girlie" magazines and the more or less pornographic picture magazines. Only highly literate adolescents will stagger through Faulkner's page-long sentences, or sift the naturalistic rubble of a Farrell novel in search of crumbs of sex. Moreover, it is possible to argue that sex education obtained in this way is better than most; or at least that serious writers, however much they may

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[3]For example, an honest if mediocre novel entitled *The Fortunate Man* when first published in England, is provided with a lurid cover and re-titled *Rage for Love* in the pocket-book edition.

be concerned with sex, have yet to be proved guilty of corrupting the morals of the young.

Thus the situation is thrice confused: by the disagreement and doubt that accompanies all efforts to define and apply the highly subjective concept of "obscenity"; by the impossibility of segregating the age groups, all of which have access to the magazine and book racks of the news dealer and the drugstore; and by the mixtures of literary merchandise, ranging all the way from genuine art and education to equally genuine and unabashed salaciousness and sadism, which are carried by the wholesale distributors and unloaded indiscriminately on their multitudinous sales outlets. But such a mass distribution system is essential to the pocket-book publishers if they are to accomplish their cultural objective of getting more good books read by more people.

Censorship of pocket books has become more effective, without becoming any more discriminating, wherever the efforts of volunteer censoring organizations have had the support of the local constituted authorities. There are adequate laws banning the sale of obscene and indecent literature in all but one of our states. In addition many cities and towns have passed local ordinances reinforcing or extending the state laws. Ordinarily, police chiefs and district attorneys concern themselves only with the under-the-counter pornography, easily recognizable as such, against whose purveyors they are confident they can get convictions under the existing obscenity laws. Sometimes, influenced either by personal conviction or by the pressure of private individuals and groups who promise them political support, they are tempted to go farther. By threatening prosecution they establish what amounts to a system of extralegal public censorship of magazines and pocket books, based usually on the NODL and other lists of disapproved literature prepared by self-appointed private censors. Such a system extends the ban far more widely than existing laws would permit, is rarely tested in the courts, and where fully applied may affect as many as 750 pocket-book titles a year. It becomes in effect a system of precensorship when enough distributors and publishers are persuaded or coerced into submitting advance copies of forthcoming books for the approval of the censors.

A large-scale pilot plant for such a system was put in operation in 1949 by Detroit's License and Censor Bureau, whose director, Police

Inspector Herbert W. Case, is the most important ally the NODL has found to date. In December, 1952 Inspector Case told the amazing Detroit story to the House Committee on Pornographic Materials. His duties, he testified, require him to "pass on the propriety of all entertainment and literature that is offered for public consumption within the city." To that end, he receives complaints from parents, teachers, school principals, church groups, and agencies dealing with juvenile delinquency. His bureau employs a staff of twelve censors who read approximately 125 pocket books a month. An assistant prosecuting attorney, a postal inspector, and an FBI agent are permanently attached to the bureau. If the official censors believe that a given pocket book violates the law, the passages considered objectionable—not the book as a whole—are submitted to the district attorney. If the latter confirms the censor's verdict, the distributor is notified to that effect and he in turn notifies the publisher. The result, in most cases, is that the book is withdrawn from circulation without a court test.

That isn't all, however. In addition to the books which the censors and the District Attorney believe to be in violation of the law, the Bureau compiles a monthly list of books which, while admittedly not subject to prosecution, are considered "partially objectionable." These too are usually withdrawn from circulation when brought to the attention of the distributor.

In this way, between 1950 and 1952, more than a hundred pocket-book titles, among them some of the best of the reprints by established authors, were removed from circulation, not only in Detroit but throughout Wayne County and in some seventeen Michigan cities outside the county to which Inspector Case's lists are regularly supplied. The reflected heat of the Detroit censorship was also felt in other cities throughout the nation whose police chiefs are supplied with the Bureau's lists, whenever an official request for them is received.[4]

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[4]In all this vast extension of his authority, Inspector Case is acting, he insists, only in response to demand. His position, as stated to the writer, is that since the pocket-book distributors ask for his lists, he is in duty bound to provide them, just as a traffic officer would be obligated to tell an inquiring motorist where he could legally park his car. The catch in this, of course, is that there is no law requiring Detroit License and Censor Bureau to prepare the lethal lists against which the terrified distributors are trying to protect themselves.

To the writer, Inspector Case confided that in his own opinion it is rather absurd that Detroit should have to do the censorship job for the nation. Because of the fecundity of the pocket-book publishers the work load of his censorship staff has become impossibly heavy, entailing over a thousand hours of overtime work in 1954. Properly, he feels, the job should be centralized at the publishing level, by the establishment of a system of industry self-censorship comparable to that developed by the motion picture industry. Presumably, such a system would also deal in precensorship for which the Detroit License and Censor Bureau has also provided the pilot plant. At least one publisher, Inspector Case told the Gathings Committee, is regularly submitting the manuscripts of forthcoming pocket-books to his bureau, and making whatever deletions and revisions it suggests.

In an attempt to obtain a judicial review of Inspector Case's radical extension of the police power, Pocket Books, Incorporated brought suit in the Detroit magistrate's court for an injunction restraining the License and Censor Bureau from interfering with the distribution of *The Devil Rides Outside*, a novel by a blind Catholic veteran named John Howard Griffin. The trial court refused to grant the injunction and the publisher lost again when the case was appealed to the Michigan Supreme Court. At this writing, Pocket Books has carried the appeal to the United States Supreme Court, which has yet to act on the case.

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Thus far nobody has successfully emulated the record of Inspector Case as America's number 1 book censor. But there have been a number of aspirants.

In Youngstown, Ohio, Chief of Police Edward J. Allen, Jr. became convinced, without bothering to read them, that "almost all" pocket books violated the Youngstown ordinance against obscenity. On January 5, 1953 Chief Allen wrote Bernard Bloch, the Youngstown magazine and pocket-book wholesaler, a letter to that effect which was simultaneously printed in the Youngstown *Vindicator*. When the startled distributor inquired "which pocket books?" Chief Allen replied immediately with a list of 108 pocket books that had been hastily compiled by his vice squad. To these he later added two additional lists obtained from the Detroit License and Censor Bureau, the first

being a selection of 140 books which in the opinion of the Wayne County prosecutor violated the Michigan State statute against obscenity, the second a selection of 195 titles which Inspector Case's bureau considered "partially objectionable." This made a total of 443 books.

Fearing arrest and prosecution, the distributor withdrew from circulation the first list of 108 books at the same time appealing for help to his publishers. One of them, the New American Library of World Literature, eleven of whose books were on Chief Allen's list, but not on Inspector Case's lists, responded by seeking an injunction against the Youngstown police chief in the United States District Court. At the same time, Chief Allen brought in reinforcements; it was announced that the Youngstown Federation of Women's Clubs would set up a committee to "screen" the current pocket-book literature, and that the distributors would then be required to withdraw the titles the screening committee considered objectionable.

Six months later, on August 5, 1953, Judge Charles J. McNamee tumbled Chief Allen's house of cards by ruling, in effect, that a policeman has no legal right to constitute himself a book censor; that he could not legally decide what books were obscene and stop their sale under threat of arrest; that his proper job, if he believed an ordinance had been violated, was merely to make the arrest and let a court decide the question of obscenity.

"Arbitrary power," wrote Judge McNamee, "inspired by good motives no less than that animated by evil intent, is an attack upon the supremacy of the law. . . . Not only did the defendant exceed his lawful powers in suppressing the publications, but the methods he employed in censoring the books were arbitrary and unreasonable."

While rebuking the police chief, Judge McNamee upheld the constitutionality of the Youngstown ordinance, which the publisher had challenged when he contended that the word "obscene" is "unconstitutionally vague and uncertain" as a definition of books subject to ban.

Three months later Chief Allen's defeat was confirmed by the verdict of the people when the anti-censorship forces won the November election. On January 1, 1954 the new mayor announced the removal of Mr. Allen and the appointment of a new police chief.

This was the second major defeat which the forces of official book censorship, allied with community pressure groups, had suffered in

the courts. Six months previously Bantam Books had obtained an injunction in the New Jersey Superior Court against Matthew F. Melko, public prosecutor of Middlesex County. In the spring of 1950 Melko ordered the New Jersey News Dealers Supply Company to withdraw from circulation 20 pocket books included in a list of 36 which had been prepared by the Middlesex County Committee on Objectionable Literature. The Union County News Dealers Supply Company of New Brunswick received a similar order, and both distributors complied with it. Later, at the request of the publisher, the Committee on Objectionable Literature took a second look at five of the Bantam books included in the proscribed list. It removed four of them, but declared that one of them, *The Chinese Room*, was properly included. This was a bowdlerized edition of a novel by Vivian Connell which in its original form had been published by the Dial Press; over 2,500,000 copies of the reprint edition had been sold.

In granting the injunction against Prosecutor Melko, Superior Court Judge Sidney Goldman ruled that the action of the distrbutors in removing *The Chinese Room* from circulation had not been voluntary, but had resulted from the threat of prosecution by Melko; hence the prosecutor was ordered to halt his "unlawful censorship" activities.

"We have here," wrote Judge Goldman, "a clear case of previous censorship in the area of literary obscenity. The way of the censor has been tortuous and tortured from the earliest times."

The judge then took occasion to review the history of censorship, from Plutarch's condemnation of Aristophanes and Plato's recommendation that Homer be expurgated, to the rebuke administered to the United States Postmaster General when the Supreme Court ruled in 1946 that he had exceeded his constitutional authority in attempting to revoke the mailing privilege of the magazine *Esquire* because of its "smoking room type humor."

This proved to be only a temporary setback for the New Jersey censors, however. Melko's successor, county prosecutor Alex Eber, appealed the Superior Court's decision, and on March 8, 1954 the New Jersey Supreme Court, while sustaining Bantam's right to distribute *The Chinese Room* in Middlesex County, failed to rule on the broader issue of the right of public prosecutors to lend their help to attempts at private censorship without resort to actual prosecution. Asserting

that the ruling constituted a blanket endorsement of his efforts at censorship, Prosecutor Eber announced that he would immediately renew his drive to eliminate printed matter "deemed objectionable" from Middlesex County newsstands.

* * *

Although in general the courts, as well as the press and often the voters, have proved hostile to censorship whenever the issue has been tested, this seems to have had little deterrent effect on the spread of city censorship boards. Since 1950 Minnesota has been almost continuously in the throes of censorship controversies. The censorship movement had its origin in St. Cloud, which in 1950 passed an ordinance creating a board of review to screen literature sold in the city, and to order distributors and news dealers to cease the sale of books "condemned" by the board. The ordinance prohibited the sale of any book that "prominently features an account of horrors, robberies, murders, arson, assault with caustic chemicals, assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, kidnapping, mayhem, rape, theft, voluntary manslaughter, ridicule of law enforcement or parental authority; or is obscene, immoral, lewd, or is suggestively obscene, immoral or lewd, or ridicules any person or persons by reason of race, creed or color, or advocates un-American or subversive activities."

The St. Cloud ordinance, which is recommended by the National Organization for Decent Literature but without the board of review, provided the model for similar ordinances passed by other Minnesota communities including Evelth, Faribault, Foley, Hibbing, Northfield, Virginia, Morris and Brainerd.

Other cities which have passed censorship ordinances, some of which set up licensing systems for newsstand and other pocket-book distributors, include Lansing, Michigan; Lynchburg, Virginia, which lists 43 pocket-book titles as obscene; Canton, Ohio; Hartford and New Britain, Connecticut; Kenosha, Wisconsin; Miami, Florida; Pawtucket, Rhode Island; and Wheeling, West Virginia.

During one year, 1953, fifteen state legislatures considered bills to control, penalize, or change the penalties for the distribution of literature, including pocket books. Most of these bills fell by the wayside. In New York, Governor Dewey vetoed the Carlino bill, which would have given police chiefs and sheriffs authority to seize allegedly

obscene printed matter. As a result of opposition by the newspapers, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of University Professors, and the American Library Association, a book censorship bill introduced in the Minnesota legislature was first amended, then tabled. Two censorship bills were beaten in Massachusetts, but in New York State the Fitzpatrick bill was passed despite objections raised by the American Book Publishers Council. In Connecticut the efforts of the Council secured some modification of the original provisions of Senate bill 1284 which would have interdicted the distribution to minors of "any book, pamphlet, or magazine, the cover or content of which exploits, is devoted to or is principally made of descriptions of illicit sex or sexual immorality, or which is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, or indecent." As finally passed, however, the bill contained language, similar to that of the Fitzpatrick bill in New York State, which the pocket-book publishers find objectionable.

On March 8, a committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York reviewed and analyzed nine of the ninety cases of interference with ordinary processes of book selection and purchase which had been reported during the year 1953 alone. On the basis of this report the Association passed a resolution condemning "the attempts of any individual or group, private or public, to interfere in any manner with the publication, circulation, or reading of any published matter, other than by means of regularly applicable statutory procedures and standards; this resolution does not purport to limit the expression of views by any individual or group concerning any published matter."

In only one state, Georgia, did the censorship forces triumph. A bill passed by the Georgia legislature created a State Literature Commission authorized to establish criteria of obscenity and order disapproved books removed from distribution. The commission proceeded cautiously and during its first year banned only four books; this despite the published views of the commission's chairman, a minister of the gospel who declared: "I don't discriminate between nude women, whether or not they are art. It's all lustful to me."

* * *

What has been the effect to date of the private and public censorship drives on the production and distribution of pocket books? To

what extent have the "obscenity" crusades restricted the expansion and qualitative development of a mass audience for serious literature?

Because detailed records are lacking, and especially because publishers and distributors can only guess at how many copies of a given banned book might have been sold in a given censorship area, it is possible to give only general answers to these questions.

In the first place, it is important to note that whereas the banning of a hard-cover book like Joyce's *Ulysses* or Edmund Wilson's *Memoirs of Hecate County* may result in a *succès de scandale* and a consequent increase of sales, the withdrawal of a pocket-book edition from the newsstands inflicts practically unmitigated loss and hardship on both author and publisher; also on the potential purchaser, who can obtain the banned book in hard covers at the bookstore only by paying five or ten times the soft cover price. It is equally important to realize that the indirect effect of censorship drives on pocket-book publishers and authors is both greater and harder to measure than the direct losses experienced when a particular pocket book is withdrawn from distribution.

It is safe to say that all pocket-book publishers are assiduous readers of the monthly NODL lists and of the frequently more extended lists prepared by local censorship committees and official bureaus; they know in general the extent to which the utilization of these lists may be expected to restrict the sale of a given title. This knowledge must inevitably affect the size of their editions and the apportionment of their promotional investments. Inevitably, too, this knowledge will affect to some degree the decisions of their editors with respect to a contemplated reprint or an original publication which, because it contains frank sexual passages, would probably be disapproved by the NODL and other censorship groups.

But are not these pressures salutary, in that such prenatal casualties of the pocket-book industry, like the suppression of already published titles, merely reduce the net output and consumption of printed salaciousness?

This undoubtedly would be the contention of the censors but there is no evidence to support it. On the contrary, such evidence as we have suggests strongly that in the area of pocket-book publication, as distinguished from sex magazines and comic books, the censors do much provable harm and little if any demonstrable good. Often,

the titles they disapprove are found to be the work of serious writers whose frank treatment of sex is incidental to larger artistic purposes which are neither pornographic nor salacious; this can scarcely be said of the careful hacks whose discreet titillation of adolescent sex obsessions frequently passes the scrutiny of both the NODL's readers and the precensorship of Inspector Case's License and Censor Bureau.

Along with a good deal of more or less salacious trash, most of it issued by pocket houses who are not members of the American Book Publishers Council, the NODL's disapproved lists include at least three books apiece by W. Somerset Maugham, Emile Zola, John O'Hara, Pierre Louys, Erskine Caldwell, James T. Farrell, and James M. Cain; also Nelson Algren's *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *Never Come Morning*, Niven Busch's *Duel in the Sun*, C. S. Forester's *The African Queen*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Love Among the Haystacks*, James A. Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*, Christopher Morley's *Kitty Foyle*, Irwin Shaw's *The Young Lions*, Natalie Anderson Scott's *The Story of Mrs. Murphy*, and Ben Ames Williams' *The Strange Women*; also Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and a collection of stories by de Maupassant. Among the books designated as "particularly objectionable" by the Detroit NODL list were Walter Karig's *Caroline Hicks*, Francois Mauriac's *The Desert of Love*, John Dos Passos' *The Forty-Second Parallel*, John Masters' *Nightrunners of Bengal*, Vardis Fisher's *Passions Spin the Plot*, Edgar Mittelholzer's *Shadows Move Among Them* and F. Van Wyck Mason's *Three Harbors*. Parents who think their adolescent children would benefit by the reading of such books as *The Sexual Side of Marriage* by M. J. Exner, M.D., *How Shall I Tell My Child*, by Belle S. Mooney, and *The Story of My Psychoanalysis* by John Knight are unable to buy them in pocket-book editions where the NODL censorship is effective.

Inspector Case's bureau cuts even more deeply into the solid substance of pocket-book culture by banning such books as James T. Farrell's *A World I Never Made*, Ernest Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees*, John O'Hara's *The Farmers Hotel*, Jan Valtin's *Wintertime*, James Warner Bellah's *Ward 20*, and Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*. On the Detroit Censor Bureau's list of "partially objectionable" books are Sherwood Anderson's *Dark Laughter*, John Dos Passos' *The Forty-Second Parallel*, James T. Farrell's *No*

Star Is Lost, MacKinlay Kantor's *Signal Thirty-Two*, and Ethel Waters' *His Eye Is On the Sparrow*.[5]

These and other books by reputable writers which appear on the NODL and other "disapproved" lists are rarely mentioned when the crusaders for decency testify before congressional and state investigation committees; obviously they have no literary or moral kinship with such flagrant literary exercises in salacity, sadism, and drug addiction as *Hot Dames on Cold Slabs*, the books of Mickey Spillane, and *Marihuana Girl*. Yet all of them, without discrimination, are brought under the same blanket condemnation and wholesale censorship on the assumption that they all endanger the morals of the young.

Not only is this assumption without warrant, even with respect to even the worst of the pocket books; it has never been established concerning books and reading in general. Policemen and juvenile court officers have testified, as did Inspector Case before the Gathings Committee, that juvenile delinquents, both boys and girls, are frequently found to be addicts of horror comics, girlie magazines and printed salacity and pornography in general. But the cause and effect relationship remains unproved. Indeed, the few scientific studies of the subject that have been made would suggest that the printed word plays only a minor role, if any, in causing juvenile delinquency.

In one study of 13,528 adolescent boys and girls only four per cent of those interviewed named books as their source of sex information. As for juvenile delinquents, a ten-year study by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck showed that on the average they read very, very little; it is significant that the Gluecks, in their exhaustive search for the causes of juvenile delinquency, considered books and reading in general to be of so little importance as not to be worth investigating. Before and after the advent of the pocket books there has been a long

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[5]A number of publishers of hard-cover books have recently brought out an intermediate series of books of superior literary merit "in cardboard covers" at $.95. This would seem to provide a partial answer to the problem of inexpensive literature. A modern "classic" may be a luxury item at $3.50. But the paper and printing in the 25 cent edition which would do for a detective story, may seem to some readers out of key for a work of more serious value. And the Knopf Vintage series, Doubleday's Anchor books and others of similar format at the $.95 price have attempted to fill this gap without in any way solving the problem facing paperback publishers.

history of prosecution of books and publishers for obscenity. Yet, as Ernst and Lindley point out in *The Censor Marches On*, "no one has ever been able to point out a specific person who has admitted being, or who can be proved to have been, injured by the publication in question."

* * *

There are laws against obscenity on the statutes of every state except New Mexico and every territory except Alaska, as well as reinforcing ordinances in most cities. They are not likely to be replaced, although their interpretation by enlightened judges becomes increasingly more liberal.

Upon the sufficiency of these laws to protect not only the morals of the young but also the freedom of all age groups to buy good books at a small price, the pocket-book publishers have taken their stand against a spreading sea of troubles. To surrender by instituting the kind of stultifying self-censorship that has so largely sterilized the cultural potential of the movies, the radio and television, would probably satisfy both the official and unofficial censors and the distributors who have become increasingly their pliant collaborators. It would also be disastrous, for the inexpensive book, more than other modern instruments of mass communication, is today an outpost of freedom in our democratic culture.

That Which Makes the Sun

By Sheila Pritchard

What can I take for supernatural powers
like a little god
one niched securely where the shadowed hours
let opals rest. No rubies
ruthless with their flare nor gold to strike
unceasing. Not a god
possessed, possessing, but a little like!

Oh there is in me that which makes the sun
a little. Like the god
whose radiance prods the leaves to overrun
their stalk, if I could find
some essence—and the gods did know
and show their favorites—
with it then, that ferment, I could rise and overflow.

I chewed the green leaf spitting foam and sticks.
Healed I. My mouth
washed clean but oldwives have revealed these tricks.
Not goddess even they!
No nor wine to reel along the veins
and shrink my sense.
I cannot drink divine this permanence.

Sheila Pritchard has published both short fiction and poetry. Her "All That Is Given" appeared in our summer, 1953 issue.

There is an ape
so cruel that those he hurts do thus assure
him of their love.
They roll in anguish and his whip insures
a tribute. But I doubt
the rule of nipping impotence endures.

There is the lasting stone to rail and raise
above my ever-sleep.
But I would be awake to stare for praise,
to taste my state.
What can I take, what should the seven seas
give back, if I could force
the mysteries they lock with seven keys?

A woman like a pheasant, bosom sleek
and irridescent, rich with oils, and meek
as falling leaves—smoky scent and seed—
what has she captured that my nature needs?
Her autumn voice recalls thin greening spring,
its boastful promise, summer's glowing greed.
Ayeh, she has truths to search and will to sing
and earthy raptures that my soul would seek:
Believing one.
But there is in me that which makes the sun
a little, and my head does not abase
itself but dares in arrogance to face
divinity, to stare the jaguar's thrust.
I will believe I am a god, though lost.

The Interpreters

By Allison Ross

5. . . 5 is not many.
5. And 2 of them senile
(tongue too pleasure-jaded to detect any longer
a taint,
nose hoarding its memories but impotent now for
adventure).
3 then. 3 to interpret. . .
but 3 that act scarcely of age.
Brash:
(my own eyes saw it, it must be true;
my own ears heard it, they can't be wrong.)
Indeed so naive we have had to build robot on robot
like them but keener, maturer,
our own 3 extended
—not raised to the 3rd power, not multiplied, not
even added—
defter-fingered or longer-armed but merely
for smaller and smaller or larger and larger
measure of the same.
Still 3—or at most 5—only,
to compensate for what might have been
well, pick any number, say modestly seventy-seven.
3—what a laugh for the gods!
Or 5 if you will.
5 to interpret the universe.

Allison Ross is the pen name of a young woman now living in New Mexico. Her poetry has been widely published in the commercial as well as in the academic press.

The Ballad of Jimmy Ray Jones

By WILLIAM WISER

WHENEVER THE POOL HALL shut down for a spell and the streets emptied out and little kids and their dogs were snatched indoors you knew that Ralph Jones was back in town. And he was, sure enough. Told his daddy he'd been off to Nashville, and he had a three-inch knife gash down the side of his face to show for it.

Ralph was one of the no-account Joneses. His teeth grew in crooked and seemed like it made him mad at the world. You know the kind: chip on his shoulder and a narrow-eyed look. He didn't take much interest in honest bootlegging like a Jones boy should, was always getting into shooting scrapes and carving his initials in jail cells. Yes sir, the Jones stock was getting played out, judging from Ralph.

That cutting didn't improve his disposition any and he took to drinking up his daddy's moonshine as soon as old Ramsey Jones and Selma took off for south Georgia to visit Selma's people. Now if the old man or Selma had've been around, things might have turned out different. Ramsey could talk his way out of Hades, and Selma was a close-mouthed, steady sort of woman. She'd take your dollar and hand you a pint through the screen door without a word, but she could smell the Law ten miles away.

Ralph was sitting on the cabin porch in a cane-bottom rocker drinking home brew out of a water pitcher, his feet propped up on the porch railing, when the Law got to snooping and poking around Three Mile Pass.

WILLIAM WISER was born and grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio but he is well acquainted with the scene of this story, Blue Ridge, Georgia, where the Wiser family home is located. Mr. Wiser, after a hitch in the Navy, is now in New York City.

You'd have figured the sight of that black Chevvy with "State Revenue Department" painted on the door would have stirred Ralph out of his rocking chair, but Ralph didn't so much as take his boots down off the porch railing. He was drunk, but not unconscious drunk. Nor disturbing-the-peace drunk—just sort of red-eyed, breath-smelling, mean-talking drunk, if you understand me.

The two State Revenue men got out of opposite sides of the car and walked slow and deliberate up the porch steps.

"What you drinking, son?" sang out one of them.

In the first place Ralph Jones wasn't a man who was pleased to discuss his drinking habits; in the second place he didn't care to be called "son."

"Water."

For that matter, Jones liquor was always as crystal clear as rain water.

The men came up on to the porch and stood with their legs apart, throwing two burly shadows across the rocking chair.

"How about if we join you for a glass?" said the second man.

Ralph didn't stir a hair; went on sitting and drinking. But just about the time one of the men brought out a pair of handcuffs Ralph eased out of that rocker and buried a switch blade about four inches into the man's beltline. Fastest move Ralph ever made, and that Revenue man flopped over against the porch rail like a split chicken.

The other man stepped back a step and shot Ralph down, cold and simple, right there on the cabin porch, and shot into him three or four times while he lay there dying.

Now Jimmy Ray Jones was out at the still, about a mile back in the woods, putting in fresh copper tubing over one of the vats. But Jimmy Ray was nothing like Ralph or what you'd expect of a Jones. He was kind of close and quiet like his ma. Whenever he came into town—to bring in a few pints for the mayor, maybe—everybody was proud to see him. It decorated the streets, so to speak, just to have him in town. He was tall and spare like the Ponsetts on his ma's side, but not skinny spare or bent-over tall. Why, you could see the muscles play under his skin-tight jeans when he walked. He had long, curly black sideburns that showed pointed and sharp against his skin. I remember when he started letting his sideburns grow out that way,

wasn't two weeks till every boy in town was letting his grow out the same way.

None of your barrel-shaped overalls for Jimmy Ray. He wore skin-tight levis with a three-inch black leather belt, and he turned the bottoms up a full turn to show the light-blue underneath side.

But Jimmy Ray wasn't one to hang around with the town boys in front of the court house or over by the taxi stand or around the filling station. He didn't bother around with the girls much either, though I've seen many a one try to catch the look of those smoke-blue eyes of his: walking that special way girls know how to walk, going out of their way to cross his path. Oh, he'd laugh a little with them, you know, or say "Howdy," but what I mean is, he never mixed up with them.

Plenty times I've seen him pull into town in that souped-up Ford of his, go about his business, then shoot on back to Three Mile Pass like he took an interest in making liquor—which he didn't, though he learned the trade good enough.

Jimmy Ray was just coming out of the pines into the clearing by the pasture gate when he heard the shots. He dropped the two jugs of moonshine he was toting and slipped up the back path to the kitchen. He got his daddy's shotgun off the pegs up over the fireplace and by the time he got to the front door he saw the state man trying to untangle his partner from the porch railing. Jimmy Ray stepped out and blasted away with Ramsey's twelve gauge.

That first round jolted the Revenue man up considerably but he managed to ease off the porch and scramble over to the Chevvy. He got into the car somehow and fired off a couple of goodbye shots before he got her backed down the drive. He carried away about ten pounds of buckshot when he left.

I don't see how that man ever got back to Clay Ridge, but he did, though he didn't last much longer than the time it took to tell his tale. Sheriff Mopes and Mayor Henderson got to him first. Then the doctor showed up; that's always the way when you're dying. By that time the man had said his piece and passed on.

It was just like a storm cloud come over Clay Ridge
For old Reverend Green was having his say,
The whole town was aroused when the killing was done
And the mob moved like hornets to lynch Jimmy Ray.

You see, old Reverend Green had personal reasons for being riled up against Jimmy Ray, the main one being Laurel, his daughter. Laurel, she kept the old man up as best she could, patched his britches and scrubbed his shirts and all, but he was just one of those old men you couldn't keep clean. He always looked like he just came from eating, specks of food stuck in his beard bristles the way it is with old men. He had a nasty way about him, too, when he wasn't preaching.

You'd have thought Georgia was going to war. What with speech-making and deputizing on every corner, the telephone office about to pop and the militia coming up from Atlanta, well, Sherman's march couldn't've stirred up more dust. And old man Green buzzing around in the middle of every crowd like the queen bee.

Everybody was trying to work out who he was going to ride with, and not a car moved out but what there were two or three hanging from the windows. The Sheriff and Mayor Henderson in a canvas-covered jeep led the way, then two or three army trucks of militia boys and the highway patrol on motorcycles and a school-bus load of the Grand Jury and the Volunteer Fire Department. Then a row of bicycles and Boy Scouts bringing up the rear.

None of your knobby hills or scrub pine or straight-and-level roadways in this part of the country, but regular, full-sized mountains to make a man catch his breath walking upwards. And the road to Three Mile Pass is steep and tricky. You drive along that road and you're smack against mountain pine at every turn. The mob moving out of Clay Ridge wound upwards and crosswise and snaked along till they got in sight of Jones' cornfield. It was that very corn, high-topped and deep yellow, that had started all the trouble.

Then there's a row of maple and spruce and that's where the cars slowed down and turned in and everybody got out on the side facing away from the cabin.

The place was all shut up tight, but a thin finger of smoke curled out of the back chimney. Ralph's body had been dragged in off the porch, but the State Revenue Officer lay spraddled out with his arms strung up on the porch rail like he was trying to help himself up. A pair of handcuffs dangled from his hands.

The excitement didn't peel off any, but it was a quiet kind of excitement once folks got a look at the body. Gil Grayson was in that crowd. He's the local undertaker, and I could see his eyes fastened

on that corpse the way a cat studies a bird. Nobody moved forward of the line of trees. Everybody had come to see bloodshed, but nobody wanted it to be *his* blood.

A person couldn't help thinking and wondering about Jimmy Ray barricaded in that cabin with his eye on a chink between the logs looking out at all those people, friends and neighbors and every living soul that Jimmy Ray ever knew and grew up with, all of them armed to the teeth and circled out around his home like hounds around a possum.

What was he thinking, in there all alone with no company but his own heartbeat? I can bet he thought of Laurel Green, for Laurel was the only girl that Jimmy Ray ever cared for. He was upside-down in love with her, and Laurel was with him.

Her eyes were sky-colored, her hair honey-white,
She was everything lovely to him,
They fitted together like checkerboard squares
When they met at the old Mountain Rim.

Laurel was a waitress at the Mountain Rim Cafe, but she was no ordinary waitress, not by a long sight. Her daddy, old Reverend Green, was a country preacher and it was an unusual thing for him even letting Laurel work at the Mountain Rim Cafe. But I guess they needed the money and there wasn't any harm in it. She was all of sixteen, time enough for a girl to be married or else out earning her keep.

Like I say, there was nothing ordinary about her. She had something—a way she walked, maybe, when she came over to your table. She was tall, too, almost as tall as Jimmy Ray, and slim the way store window statues are slim. Why, a man could put his hands around her waist and his fingers and thumbs would touch. Not that anybody ever tried it. It was just something you noticed and thought about doing, if you know what I mean.

And Jimmy Ray must have noticed it and thought about it, for town folks started seeing his Ford parked in front of the Mountain Rim Cafe. He got to sitting around the Mountain Rim fussing with Duke's Mixture or poking around the pinball machine or dropping nickels in the juke box, the way a person does in a small town road-

stand. Nothing much else to do but stare at the No Credit signs. Just killing time, more or less, and I've seen a hundred do it.

But it wasn't like Jimmy Ray—he wasn't the kind, you see. He'd sit at the counter cleaning his fingers with a knife blade and spinning around on his stool every time the screen door clapped shut. For Laurel Green worked at the Mountain Rim from four in the evening till midnight, and it was those hours that Jimmy Ray was interested in.

Then Laurel would come in, two spots blazing on her cheeks and her eyelids dropped down at the sight of Jimmy Ray, seeing him perched there at the counter and knowing he was waiting for her. Her cheeks didn't blaze for no other customers, you can bet, and she wasn't the kind to look down unless she was sweeping the floor.

They'd carry on the way young folks have done for time ever. He'd say "Howdy" just as unconcerned (but he'd be trying to stuff his pocket-knife into his jeans without closing the blade first). He acted as if any old body had walked in the door, but his eyes would be sparkling and clear as a pint of his daddy's brew.

And she'd brush in close beside him, plucking at her hair the way girls do when they come in out of the wind, and say "Hi" like he was just another customer (but forgetting to shut the screen door in her excitement).

Then he'd sidle over to the juke box and play "If Only You'd Tell Me You Loved Me" by the Red River Valley Boys (lot of harmonica and a little fiddling). And maybe after she'd got her apron fastened and her hair fixed right she'd wander over to the juke box too, like she had to dust it or something, then drop a nickel in the slot and play "I'm Sorry I Met You Too Late" with the Mountaineer Trio and Laurabelle Scott.

Then he'd punch "Smoky Mountain Blues" (just guitar and banjo).

And she'd play "My Tears Will Seal This Letter."

If the place was empty or the other customers had been tended to, they'd talk sometimes.

"Are the cokes cold?" he'd ask.

"You ought to know better'n me. You just had one, silly."

"That's right. It was pretty cold."

"You like for them to be cold?"

"Well, sort of. But not *too* cold."
And he'd punch "Playing the Field With My Heart."
And she'd play "Heartstrings Across Your Guitar."
Any fool could see they were in love.

Now the Mountain Rim owner was Gimpy McGuire
His right leg stove in at the knee,
You wouldn't have noticed him but for his limp
But he was ornery and slick as could be.

And to make matters worse, Gimpy was crazy in love with Laurel, too, though he never showed it or owned up to it. He was the kind of man you could look straight at and even talk to and the next minute forget he was there. Being crippled and all, a person like that can get a bad taste in his mouth after awhile. Gets a set-off feeling like he was a freak or something and wants to get back at people. He starts out not meaning any harm, just a craving to be talked about and made up to and then after awhile a meanness gets to gnawing at his insides. And being jealous over Laurel steamed it up all the worse.

Jimmy Ray and Laurel never paid any attention to him. They'd overlook him like everybody else in town and of course Jimmy Ray couldn't see the hate daggers sticking out of Gimpy's eyes.

Gimpy'd hang around the cash register when Jimmy Ray was in the place and glower at him and Laurel from behind the stack of potato-chip bags and cigarette cartons. Laurel was too good a waitress to be told about her work, so Gimpy couldn't do a thing but try to stare them both to death. And Laurel and Jimmy Ray were in such a private fog that the Mountain Rim could have burned down around them before they'd have smelled smoke.

* * *

Sheriff Mopes figured he'd have to make the first move so he got out of the jeep while the County Agent handed a megaphone out to him.

"This is the Sheriff, Jimmy Ray," he bellowed through the mouthpiece. "I've come to take you in."

"Take you in" echoed back at him from the surrounding hills, but nothing from the cabin: no word, no sign. The smoke trailed upwards from the chimney.

"He's in there, all right," said the Sheriff to Mayor Henderson.

"That may be, Sheriff. I expect you're right," said the mayor, who never put himself out much.

"Problem is how to get him out."

"That's the ticket, Sheriff."

And the mayor cleared his throat and checked his timepiece.

Folks were out of their cars now, and shuffling around looking for something to happen. Reverend Green moved out of the crowd and reached for the megaphone. "Give me that thing, Mopes," he said, and the Sheriff gave it to him gladly.

"Jimmy Ray! Can you hear me?"

"Can you hear me?" bounced back at him from the opposite hill and sounded two or three times from the creek valley. It was a lonely sound that trailed off in a sort of wail. Then it was quiet again.

"We know you're in there! This is Reverend Green speaking to you. Give yourself up, boy. Come on out and you'll get a fair trial."

And "fair trial" echoed back.

"If you don't come out, the law will come in after you."

Then a shot rang out and the megaphone went spinning out of the preacher's mouth and landed ten feet away.

Well, Jimmy Ray had good enough reason to be against the old man. They'd had it out once before, the first night Jimmy Ray brought Laurel home from the Mountain Rim Cafe.

On that evening Jimmy Ray was sitting beside the juke box rolling a cigarette and pretending to be interested in getting every single grain of tobacco into the paper crease. Laurel strolled over like she wanted to see if the juke box was plugged in. Of course it was, and you could tell plain enough, for it was blowing those fancy-colored bubbles all up and down its sides and gurgling kind of contented the way those juke boxes do when they're waiting for somebody to drop a nickel in and set them off. But Laurel went over to see if it was plugged in anyway.

Jimmy Ray was sitting alone with a glass of water in front of him and his Duke's Mixture sack on the table top for company. He'd drunk all the cokes he could hold, so water was his drink right then.

Gimpy, he was fussing and fuming over by the potato chip sacks when Laurel walked over to Jimmy Ray's table like she was barefoot on glass.

"Ever hear 'We Waited Too Long For the Moon to Get Full'?" she asked him casual like.

"No. Is it a new one?"

Jimmy Ray pretended to be picking up tobacco, one grain at a time, but the specks of flint-blue showed at the corners of his eyes where he was watching her walk by.

"Brand new. Just in today and nobody but me's played it yet."

Jimmy Ray got right up and played "We Waited Too Long For the Moon to Get Full" while Laurel wiped the table where he sat. He just had a glass of water.

The machine thumped and popped after the number was over and Laurel said, "It's pretty, ain't it?"

"It's beautiful."

"It's like a real pretty poem."

"It sure is."

And he sat down to his glass of water.

Jimmy Ray sat quiet and dreamy for a spell while Laurel stood beside the juke box and pretended to study the selection keys, though she knew every number by heart.

Then Jimmy Ray up and asked, "You have to work late tonight?"

"Prob'ly. It's Saturday. Truckers get in about midnight."

He spun the glass a couple of good spins on the table top. Gimpy, over by the soft drink cooler, looked like he was going to crawl through the display case. His eye teeth stuck out over his lower lip.

"How you going to get home?"

"Mr. McGuire calls a cab. It's only just two miles to where I live."

"You can ride home with me if you want."

Some of the water slopped over on the table and Laurel wiped it up. Gimpy's face had lost all of its natural shade and took on the color of burnt leaves.

"But you live the other way," said Laurel.

"That's all right."

Couldn't either one of them see Gimpy slide off and edge around back to the wall phone, and didn't either one of them hear him spin the dial. For Laurel was looking hard at the way Jimmy Ray's fingers

played over the cigarette he was building and Jimmy Ray was watching the rainbow reflection from the juke box flow along Laurel's starched white apron and blouse.

When the Mountain Rim started filling up with Saturday night trade, Jimmy Ray went outside and sat in the front seat of his Ford, smoking till he wearied of the taste of tobacco. Then he propped his feet up on the dash and dozed off to the tune of "Mountaineer's Folly" coming faint and distant-sounding from inside the Mountain Rim Cafe. He slept there with his hands up behind his neck and his elbows stretched out like wings while the neon glow from "Open All Nite" flashed across his face. Finally, about two in the morning, Laurel came out.

They drove home together down to Gravelly Gap and over that new bridge where the old sawmill used to be. The road was moonlit and empty except when a trucker went thundering past up out of Atlanta. Nobody will ever know what was said on that drive, but it was pretty certain history that Jimmy Ray would be furnishing all the nickels for the juke box from then on. Oh, you could mark Jimmy Ray and Laurel down in your book as "taken" and start in on a fresh page.

But old man Green was waiting for them on the front porch.

He met Laurel and Jimmy Ray coming up the path arm-in-arm, neither one of them looking where they were walking. He stopped them dead, lit into a Saturday night sermon that's not in the scriptures. From what I hear, words like "damn moonshiner" and "bootlegging trash" rang out around Gravelly Gap like church bells. Wasn't any stopping the old man, so Jimmy Ray just stood there beside Laurel, tall like a mountain pine, and let him have his say. Then he turned off and walked down the path without so much as a word.

"And I ain't done with him yet," the old man told Laurel.

She was pushing and grabbing at him to get him back up on the porch.

"Why'd you have to go and do that for?"

She finally got him inside, but you get a preacher wound up and he's not likely to stop for breath just because his congregation's walked off. He kept it up, wild and raving I hear, for the rest of the night.

Well, usually the old man was in bed of a Saturday night so's he'd be up early Sunday morning. It was always that way and Laurel

hadn't figured any different. Seems like Gimpy got the old man on the phone and got him out of bed. Laurel shouldn't ever have got a telephone put in. An old man with a telephone is a dangerous thing. I've been against them from the start, still am, and there's plenty of folks that'll back me up.

From that night on, Laurel had to get out of Jimmy Ray's car just this side of where the old sawmill used to be. She'd cross over the new bridge and walk the rest of the way home while Jimmy Ray stood beside his Ford till she got inside the house. She'd walk backwards nearly, waving and throwing kisses all the way up the drive.

But old man Green, he was reading up on how to call Long Distance.

The crowd scattered like rain at the sound of the shot
But the bullet had passed wide and high,
The preacher he cussed in a violent way
That surprised the folks standing nearby.

The Sheriff picked up the megaphone and squinted at the bullet hole in it.

"Got his granddaddy's rifle. That's not Ramsey's twelve gauge."

The mayor put on his glasses and inspected the bullet hole and nodded.

Nobody came forward to make any more suggestions, so things sort of reached a standstill, like when a clock has run down. Then the crowd began to break up into little bunches with quiet, whispery talk and a lot of the men began to light up or tear off a chew of tobacco. Some of them began to relax, even, and lean against car fenders if they were facing away from the cabin.

The militia men were lined up beside an army truck. The sergeant kept after them to stand at attention, but they got restless and took to scratching themselves. They were just young boys: corn silk sprouting out of their chins so's you could hardly tell them from the boy scouts. So Sergeant Myers, he sent the whole lot of them around back of the cabin where they lay down behind the woodpile like they were in trenches.

Just about dark the women came up in the county school bus bringing sandwiches and hot coffee. I got to thinking about Jimmy

Ray: nobody bringing *him* hot coffee and he could look out and see the thermos jugs going around and everybody settled back like they were at an all-night singing with dinner on the ground.

The sun slipped behind Clay Mountain, and the greens all got greener and the clouds along the ridge were streaked with orange and patches of milk-blue showed through. I thought, Jimmy Ray's watching that sunset, seeing those pine and spruce turn a deep evening green, and wondering if there'll be another dawn. My coffee and cold pork didn't taste right after that.

When it got dark enough the Boy Scouts built bonfires, and the women moved around between the cars handing out torches of kerosene and tar. Nobody had sense enough to bring a lantern or a flashlight. A good-sized space was lit up with fire like Depot Street on Saturday night, and a good thing, too, for the moon was behind those sudsy-grey clouds and only the evening star showed through. People kept close to the fires, for it's cool in the mountains of an evening, and nobody made a move forward. Finally, the Sheriff fired off a couple of shots at the cabin door just to show he was active, and some of the other men joined in and peppered the log front. But not a stir from inside.

"Maybe he's wounded," said one man.

"Or dead," said Mopes.

Then somebody says, "Well, I ain't going to try to find out which."

And a bunch of them laughed. It's downright chilling the way some men will make a joke of the touchiest things.

It finally got so dark and uncertain that folks turned their headlights on the cabin, to make sure Jimmy Ray didn't slip away in the night. You could hear the militia boys pop a bullet against the backside of the cabin every once in awhile—I expect they got hold of those two jugs of corn Jimmy Ray dropped.

Nothing came of any of the shooting. Jimmy Ray was still huddled in the dark somewhere, not moving or lighting a light or firing back. He was just waiting.

Then a whisper went through the crowd.

"That girl's here."

"Over there by the truck, the one in white."

"Old Reverend Green's girl, ain't it?"

It was Laurel, sure enough, standing beside the army truck talking to Sheriff Mopes and the mayor. Her face was earnest and strained-looking and her freckles had paled out like the moon behind those clouds, but she wasn't crying or wringing a handkerchief when she talked the way women usually do at times like that. No, she was standing straight as a poplar and talking reasonable and clear, you could tell, because Mopes and the mayor were nodding at her. They bobbed their heads back and forth like puppets, then they called Sergeant Myers and the County Agent and they bobbed their heads awhile.

The talk and the buzz-buzz of whispering flowed up and down the line of people like the wind through dried corn stalks and everybody was turned looking at Mopes and Henderson and Sergeant Myers and Agent Griffin. In the center was Laurel, dressed neat and pretty in her waitress clothes.

Her daddy (still shook up from getting shot at) pushed into the group and you could see his chin whiskers moving up and down, but he got overruled and Laurel didn't even so much as look his way. She said straight out to the Sheriff, "There's no need of killing. I'll call to him and he'll come out, but you must promise to take him to jail for fair trial."

Everybody nodded.

Right away the Sheriff got to directing the lead cars like a traffic cop, lining them all up close so's their headlights pointed to the porch. Once they got set, that porch was as light as day. Like searchlights were played on it.

Just before Laurel stepped out into the light, somebody held the megaphone out to her but she pushed it aside and moved out of the crowd and on to the gravel drive leading up to the cabin. She walked in a path of pure white light: she looked transparent-like, her hair wispy-white and flowing back from the breeze.

She walked straight and alone up the path that led to where Jimmy Ray was. And you wondered if he could see her walking along like that, and what was in his mind when he saw her coming to him. Oh, the crowd was quiet as death and you could hear the crickets and night birds then. Two hundred pairs of eyes and two dozen sets of headlights bore down on the spot where Laurel walked—and a pair of smoke-blue eyes watched from the cabin.

"Jimmy Ray, this is Laurel."

Her voice was as clear and light as chimes. Even the birds and crickets shut down when she called. It was like she stood out on a stage behind footlights, the curtain going up.

"I want you to come out, Jimmy. You'll be with me and it's all right. They want to take you for trial."

There was a couple of minutes then that you could count heartbeats all up and down that crowd—two minutes of a quiet that was so still and empty you could hear it. If a twig had snapped, a dozen souls would have passed out from heart failure.

Then the front door of the Jones cabin creaked and swung open. Behind that door was the deepest black I've ever seen till Jimmy Ray, looking ghostly in the glare of headlights, stepped out of it. His long sideburns showed black against the white of his face, and his mouth was as hard-set and straight as his ma's. But his eyes were turned to Laurel, and there wasn't another soul at Three Mile Pass for all Jimmy Ray cared. He didn't look an inch farther than where Laurel stood.

The quiet let up a little bit and folks started in whispering again, just to let off steam. Nothing sensible to say, you know, but just relieved to talk.

Jimmy Ray started down the porch steps to where Laurel was, his arms starting to open out to her. But that was when the shot rang out.

High and clear, it sounded, the sharp crack of a rifle. Jimmy Ray looked out at the forest of faces just for an instant, a hurt, disappointed look on his face, before his legs caved in under him and he toppled over toward Laurel.

Laurel grabbed for him but it was like trying to hold onto a scarecrow, for he just crumpled up and slid out of her arms and away from her there at the bottom of the porch steps. He just slipped down and away from her leaving a red streak down the front of her starched white apron.

Then faces turned to where Gimpy McGuire stood holding a rifle with the stock still lodged against his shoulder. His mouth hung slack, but the skin of his face was stretched tight as a dried pelt. Old man Green stood beside him nodding and staring the way old men do.

Everybody spoke up then and stepped from behind trees and even the women came forward, the whole mob of them moving in together.

But Gil Grayson got there first, and then the Sheriff. That's always the way, and an undertaker will have the last word every time. Laurel had Jimmy Ray's head cradled in her arms and Gil was there beside them before old Mopes got his second breath.

On stormy nights, even now—when sleep is dear—I'm restless with remembering the sight of Laurel bent over Jimmy Ray and Gil Grayson hovering behind them like the angel of death.

* * *

The Jones cabin is all sagging in now: you see, Ramsey Jones and Selma were never heard from again. The porch roof gave way last October and kids have busted all the window lights out.

Now the Mountain Rim Cafe, it's been spruced up considerably. They've got tablecloths and printed menus, and Gimpy, he's got his rifle tacked up over the cash register where a calendar used to be. He got headlines in the Atlanta papers.

The kids around here say the old Jones place is haunted. Nights when the moon is half hid behind those scuddy clouds they say you can see a ghostly finger of smoke trailing up out of the chimney and the figure of a man in the cabin doorway, his arms just starting to raise.

Anyhow, that's the way the last verse of that song goes, till folks have gotten to half way believing it. I guess it was the song as much as anything else that drove Laurel Green away from Clay Ridge. Nobody saw her since that night. I expect she's waiting tables at some roadstand somewhere—somewhere far off where she can get through the night without hearing that tune on the juke box.

You see, a cowboy singer, a right famous one, made a record of that song with an electric guitar, and it's sung slow and sad-like with a country-style quartet singing a background refrain. The words are pretty much the way it happened; of course, they've been made to rhyme. The whole story is there in that song, and if you care to hear it just go into any mountainside cafe. It's on all the juke boxes.

Amnesia

By Helmer O. Oleson

The arrow no longer recalls the bow
And summer has forgotten spring . . .
The long door of my room
Is closing softly. . . .

The telephone has been disconnected
With perambulant infanthood.

I have complete privacy.

Life is now becoming a legend,
The present moment . . . an ancestral blank.

I have become anonymous.

The cradled child has returned
To the inner chamber behind the eyeball.

Squalor is shut out and eliminated.

It is quiet now in my attic room
The sparrow of the mind has found refuge . . . in a cage.

That is why
I do not know you.
I have never seen you before.
You are completely unknown.

Helmer O. Oleson has recently published a number of poems giving impressions of mental states. His profession is social work in the field of criminology.

Intellectuals and the Labor Movement

By VALDEMAR CARLSON

By 1947 the trade union movement had attained a position of power that cannot be duplicated in any other period in American history. Unions were less powerful than Westbrook Pegler maintained, but the strikes of 1946, and their threat of social disruption, did create apprehension in the public mind, which gave support to the eightieth Congress in its effort through the Taft-Hartley Act to put some limitations on the authority and power of unions and their leaders. Eight years after the passage of Taft-Hartley, unions have continued to operate more effectively than the castigation of the act by union leaders as a "slave labor law" would lead one to believe. True, organizing the unorganized has proved to be more difficult, but that may be due in part to the diminished zeal of organizers and the indifference or hostility of workers. Unions, however, have not stopped increasing their membership as Irving Bernstein statistically established in a recent article in the *American Economic Review*. Where unions are well established the Taft-Hartley Act has not been used by employers as a legal club to rid themselves of labor organizations and collective bargaining. The continued vitality of organized labor in spite of dire predictions of the effect of the law, and the advent of a Republican administration in 1953, should be ample proof that unionism is here to stay.

Intellectuals who claim to be aware of contemporary social trends can be hostile or sympathetic to the labor movement; they cannot be indifferent. To determine what their attitude is or should be, it is essential to develop a factually sound explanation of the labor move-

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ment. The initial stages of such an inquiry will necessarily lead to an examination of the thesis of Selig Perlman.

Perlman's *Theory of the Labor Movement* appeared in 1928 and was republished in 1949. The author had been a student and colleague of the late John R. Commons and his book is an outstanding example of the pragmatism of the so-called Wisconsin school. (The influence of Commons in contributing to the pragmatic approach associated with the University of Wisconsin is of course well known.) Three social forces, according to Perlman, determine the character of any labor movement:

1. The psychology of scarcity of the manual laborers who view the world as one which offers limited opportunity.

2. The optimism of businessmen who by their effective will-to-power are able to determine the survival of capitalism.

3. The idealism of intellectuals who visualize labor as an "abstract 'mass' in the grip of an abstract 'force.' "

Each of these attitudes needs some examination.

Perlman derives his concept of job-conscious unionism out of what he interprets to be the psychological characteristics of laborers. He maintains that the typical manual laborer

> is aware of his lack of native capacity for availing himself of economic opportunities as they lie amidst the complex and ever shifting situations of modern business. He knows himself neither for a born taker of risks nor for the possessor of a sufficiently agile mind ever to feel at home in the midst of the uncertain game of competitive business. Added to this is his conviction that for him the world has been rendered one of scarcity by an institutional order of things, which purposely reserved the best opportunities for landlords, capitalists and other privileged groups.

An entirely different psychology characterizes the businessman. His optimism leads him to view the world as his oyster. The action of a businessman when he enters into price agreements which directly or indirectly ration economic opportunity, "has always sprung from the 'head' but never spontaneously nor from the 'heart.' . . ."

The intellectual who has established contact and influence with trade unions is still another type of person determining the character of a labor movement. Because of his desire for social reform and his tendency to view labor as "an abstract 'mass' in the grip of an abstract 'force' " he is necessarily a disruptive influence to the kind of job-

conscious unionism really desired by workers. Trade unions have to fight not only employers but also the intellectual who would exploit labor organizations to achieve his own ideals of a new social order.

> So long as the intellectual is investigating specific subjects which have definite and calculable bearings upon workers' welfare,—for instance, industrial accidents, unemployment, wage trends, and the like, his tendency to reduce labor in the concrete to an abstraction is restrained. But let the intellectual's thought turn from relatively prosaic matters like the above mentioned to the infinitely more soul-stirring one of "labor and the social order" and it is the rare intellectual who is able to withstand an onrush of overpowering social mysticism. Labor then ceases to be an aggregation of individuals seeking as a group to control their common economic opportunity in accord with common rules, as well as to enlarge that opportunity.

Intellectuals seriously interested in the labor movement are classified by Perlman as

1. The Marxian, who visualizes labor as a force which is trying to break through its capitalistic strait jacket.

2. The ethical intellectual, who sees labor striving to rise from its degradation of "wagery" into freedom promoted through a variety of utopian associations.

3. The efficiency intellectual best typified by the Fabian, who "sees labor as a 'mass' propelled by the forces of its awakened burning interest in a planned economic order yielding maximum technical and social efficiency."

Following its 1949 republication, *A Theory of the Labor Movement* was subjected to rigorous examination by friendly and hostile critics. They can be grouped by reaction about as follows:

1. Those writers who claim that his thesis is fundamentally sound and is as applicable to the labor situation of the 1950's as it was in the 1920's in spite of the Great Depression, the Wagner Act, war, inflation, Taft-Hartley, the rise of industrial unionism and the PAC.

2. Less friendly critics who maintain that the theory is now outmoded because of the many social changes which have occurred since 1928, including a basic change in the operation of trade unions.

3. Hostile critics who argue that Perlman's book is only a description of the functioning of trade unions with some valuable insights, but contend that it is not a *theory* of the labor movement.

It should be a matter of some significance that the book was published in the decade of the 1920's. Its theoretical content and the particular interpretation that it makes of the labor movement is certainly in part affected by the period in which it was written. Intellectuals, to whom ideas are so significant, must be aware of history and the importance of the past in shaping the contours of an uncertain future. To go further and draw historical parallels is always hazardous, but nonetheless fascinating. The present interest of students of the labor movement in a book written in the 1920's may be due in part to many similarities which the mid-1950's have to the 1920's. It is difficult to imagine *A Theory of the Labor Movement* written in the 1930's when industrial unionism was in the ascendant and our economy was limping along at a level considerably below its maximum productive capacity. A limited goal unionism and the dominance of a business ideology with its emphasis on costs are both likely products of a period of prosperity when employment is easy to come by and when the main economic problem is efficient allocation of resources and not the level of aggregate income and employment.

Perlman's contention that American unions are not oriented toward socialism, particularly if the generalization applies to a period of prosperity and full employment, can be accepted as obvious. His strictures on the intellectual are, in part, self-flagellation since he was a devoted follower of Marx in his early youth. It was his contact with John R. Commons at the University of Wisconsin which led him to abandon his belief in Marxism and to examine the working rules of unions as a necessary prelude to the development of job-conscious unionism. To characterize trade unions as primarily designed to gain job security for their members does have the useful purpose of undermining the ideology of the social revolutionaries who seek to exploit the labor movement for their own ends. Job-security unionism, however, is a term with too limited a meaning to cover the full scope of union activity. As contrasted with European union members, American workers are certainly not class conscious, but there is a solidarity in their reactions, particularly when their organizations are under attack, that transcends mere concern about the job. J. B. S. Hardman's "consciousness of kind" may be a better term to explain labor's operational solidarity. For example, the obvious intention of the Taft-Hartley Act to drive a wedge between the rank-and-file members of the unions

and their leaders backfired because workers, however much they may be envious and suspicious of union leaders, accept the necessity of union organization. The requirement that an N.L.R.B. election must be held to determine whether or not a union shop should be established showed workers so overwhelmingly in favor of the shop that it was abandoned. Significantly, the repeal of the requirement of a vote on the union shop is the only amendment adopted since the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. The studies of workers' attitudes at Swift and Company by Father Purcell show loyalty to the union to be quite strong, not only among members, but to a surprising extent among nonmembers.

The United States has experienced an amazing improvement in union-management relations in the last several years. Successful collective bargaining and the industrial peace which it has engendered is a concrete tribute to the vitality of American democracy. Not to be overlooked are the contributions of professionally trained people (perhaps they could be called intellectuals), including economists, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, and the more specialized functions of mediators and arbitrators.

When one leaves the area of collective bargaining and union-management relations on the plant or industry level, and seeks to appraise the influence of trade unions on society or the whole economy, the picture is not so clear.

Marxism has a faith in the messianic function of organized labor and promises the millenium or a classless society, but its theoretical preconceptions are anachronistic, certainly as capitalism operates in the United States.

Classical economics, when its postulates are used as the theoretical framework in which the labor movement is evaluated, goes to the other extreme and presents a gloomy outlook. At best, a strong labor movement will promote secular inflation, at worst it will destroy the capitalist system. Two recent books which assess the probable effect of unions on the economy, *The Impact of the Union*, a symposium of some of America's leading economic theorists, and *Unions and Capitalism* by Charles E. Lindblom, give the reader a very gloomy view as to the probable impact of large-scale unionism on the future functioning of the economy. Lindblom is particularly pessimistic as to the ultimate effect of large-scale unionism on the whole economy. In the

preface he asserts his liberalism; nevertheless his reasoning leads him to believe "that unionism is disruptive in a competitive economy." "For the thesis of this book," he says, "is that unionism and the private enterprise economy are incompatible; that once unions become strong, the attempt to maintain our economy as it now stands produces unemployment or inflation." Before present-day economists commit themselves irrevocably to the ill effects of large-scale unionism on the capitalist economy, it would be well for them to remember how the "dismal science" got its name. The pessimistic predictions of early nineteenth century economists, based upon the application of the reasoning of Malthus and Ricardo, proved erroneous when their static assumptions were pierced by an expanding technology. It is probable that neither the heaven visualized by the Marxists nor the hell anticipated by Lindblom and other economic theorists will actually be realized as the economy gets the full impact of large-scale unionism.

Intellectuals who are realistic cannot overlook the disruptive aspects of unionism. But every social group, if it has any power at all, will necessarily have some disruptive aspect. Labor organizations are in an unfortunate position: their disruptive influences are like the visible portion of an iceberg, whereas their constructive influences are not so generally recognized. Is there even an occasional reader of the daily paper who is not aware of violence in labor disputes, of the existence of racketeering and of Communist-dominated unions; of labor leaders who seem to be more interested in their own power and prestige than in the welfare of their members? What of the constructive aspects? Promoting the welfare and raising wages of their members will be grudgingly admitted as contributions of unions, but the significance of unions as a bulwark of a free, democratic society may not be quite so clear. In appraising such influences of unions one should not assume that members of unions and their leaders are any less selfish than people in other organizations. It may be true, however, that the drive of unions to achieve their own ends may contribute to the welfare of the social whole.

Reform and social change in the general interest may not take place without the disinterested support of people who have no ax to grind. Nevertheless, everybody's business is nobody's business and the general interest may be lost in a democratic society unless powerful social groups in seeking their own ends contribute to the welfare of

the whole. The classic example of self-interest contributing to the general interest is that of businessmen who, in the hope of profits, seek to reduce costs of production, and through the pressure of competition are forced to pass on the economies to the consumer in the form of lower prices. Indeed, one of the subsidiary effects of successful collective bargaining appears to be that of making business executives work harder to achieve additional economies which will offset the concessions they are forced to grant to unions. But this contribution of businessmen to social welfare falls short of fulfilling all the desiderata of a healthy social organization. One clearly recognized need is that of maintaining civil liberties and another is that of full employment. Unions may have as much self-interest in fostering these desiderata as businessmen have in keeping down their costs of production.

Today there is much less inclination to consider unions as the bulwark of civil liberties than was the case in the 1930's. Preoccupation with the immediate interest of the union, the drive for power on the part of many union leaders, giving hostages to Communism in the early days of the C.I.O., and disclosures of racketeering have all tended to moderate our enthusiasm for unions as a means of protecting, defending and extending civil liberties. Paradoxically, however, even though a union leader exercises dictatorial powers over his union, it is nevertheless true that the welfare of his organization requires open channels of communication and civil liberties in the larger community. The freedom to communicate is as necessary for the expanding union as the free market is to the entrepreneur who wishes to start a business or introduce a new product.

The other need of a democratic society, in which unions have a particular stake, is that of maintaining a full employment economy. Perhaps Peter Drucker is right when he argues that the dominant forces in the American economy today and for the next twenty years are propelling us toward inflation rather than unemployment and lagging industrial production. We must recognize, however, that powerful pressure groups, in seeking their own economic ends, may undermine the props of a full employment economy. Significant in this connection is the effort to eliminate, or at least to reduce, the progressive character of our tax structure. Certainly, we cannot take for granted the maintenance of a full employment economy in spite of the contributions of a rapidly expanding population and the large

investments which necessarily must accompany automation and other technological improvements. If the cold war should end and military expenditures be reduced, we might be faced with an acute problem of maintaining a high level of aggregate employment. It is at this point that the self-interest of trade unions is most likely to be effective. We may grant that Congress passed the Employment Act of 1946, but the act itself is little more than a good resolution by government to use its powers to maintain employment. Whether it does so in practice will depend upon the degree of political pressure exerted upon Congress and our administrative agencies. While investment spending is the dynamic factor contributing to a high national income, and hence to employment, without a broad base of consumer purchasing power, investment will necessarily decline.

Unions claim that they help to provide this broad base of purchasing power by pushing up wages through collective agreement. Wage increases gained through collective bargaining tend to be offset by organizational efficiencies or to be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. Certainly there is little evidence that wage increases brought about by collective agreements have reduced the size of aggregate corporate profits. Whatever the success of collective bargaining in raising wages or in improving working conditions in particular plants or industries, its effect in changing income distribution for the whole economy appears to be very small, if it has any effect at all.

The contributions of unions to greater equality of income distribution must largely occur through their influence on Congress and administrative agencies. Union leaders have an expansionist attitude toward the economy and are likely to advocate such measures of fiscal policy as a high level of public spending and deficit financing which have a tendency to promote a high level of employment. We have had enough experience with compensatory fiscal policy to know that it can be quite effective in offseting declining business spending. For instance, the large federal budget and deficit financing contributed to minimize the severity of the 1949 depression. A more recent example of the beneficial effects of deficit financing is to be seen in the last half of 1953 when government expenditure exceeded receipts by around nine billions of dollars. While we had a mild recession toward the

end of 1953 and in 1954, it would have been more severe without deficit financing.

While unions are important as pressure groups, so long as they continue to challenge the power of business management, they do contain an element which promotes social change. This change, however, is only to a peripheral extent socialistic in character. One of the marked characteristics of the postwar period has been the decline in the status of socialism as a means to solve economic problems. The eclipse of socialism is confined to the advanced industrial countries; underdeveloped countries seem committed to develop industry through government ownership and operation of the basic industries. There are a number of reasons for the decline in socialism, but a few of them appear obvious. The constructive example of the United States in achieving a high standard of living under the aegis of capitalism, and the negative example of Soviet Russia and her satellites, where nationalization of industry has been accompanied by the destruction of freedom without any evident improvement in material welfare, has had considerable influence.

But there is a more fundamental reason for the rejection of socialism as an answer to contemporary economic problems. Socialism, whether of a Marxist or non-Marxist variety, exaggerated the significance of the ownership of wealth. Economic power no longer has its sole or determining base in the ownership of property. Indeed, passive ownership of property in the form of stocks or bonds carries scarcely any power. On the other hand, a corporation executive, who himself owns little property, may and does exercise considerable power. A government, which is strong enough and possesses the legislative will, can accomplish about as much through its regulating function and its fiscal and monetary powers as it can through taking over ownership of the means of production.

Traditionally, intellectuals have been attracted to socialism as a solution to complex social problems. If social change seems to ignore the socialist route, at least in capitalist America, some re-thinking of their basic social philosophies seems in order. The American labor movement has traditionally shown little interest in socialism and in general has not exercised much more than intermittent pressure group tactics to the attack on broad social and economic problems. As intellectuals adjust themselves to the possibilities of progressive social

change without the necessary socialization of the means of production they may recognize in the labor movement an organized force with whose social orientation they find themselves in general sympathy.

With the establishment of a single peak organization resulting from the merger of the A. F. of L. and C. I. O., organized labor can be expected to play a more significant role in the determination of broad economic and social policies. Organized labor has already demonstrated its ability to carry on the orderly procedure of collective bargaining with distinctive success. Its test as a labor movement in the larger area of social-political relations is yet to come, and its success may well depend upon the cooperation of intellectuals.

Invisible Acrobats

By Edward Watkins

The children dancing lightweight in the street,
the baby gurgling alto in her carriage,
the boys who stickball on the quiet beat,

turn to the world as to the Book of Knowledge
or the painted globe an aunt bought: palpable
as marbles, ringolevio or porridge.

The future is the promised carousel,
the circus poster (HURRY—JUST BEGINNING);
while up above them—taut, invisible

the acrobats of history go on spinning
all that the penny fortune failed to tell.

New Yorker Edward Watkins has published short fiction (*Atlantic Monthly, Story*) as well as poetry. He has been employed in publishing, advertising, motion pictures, and is currently with a lecture bureau.

"Politics"—Still a Dirty Word

By MAURICE KLAIN

THE GREEKS had a word for "city-state," the focus of their common life and culture, their civil arts and government. The word was *polis*. From it stemmed a vocabulary which signified a way of living, a type of social ethics, a form of public service. Pursuit of "the good life" under the leadership of pre-eminent citizens was its ideal. Greek poets and philosophers immortalized the civic virtues which the *polis* represented.

Our word "politics" is an offshoot of *polis*. But "politics" for us Americans is wrapped up in quite a different set of connotations. It is, you might say, a good word gone wrong. You can test this assertion yourself. What does "politics" make *you* think of?

A reporter put to President Eisenhower recently an inquiry of this type. I myself have popped the question on college students—hundreds of them—both in the Middle West and in the Ivy League. The President and the students react the same way when the word "politics" rubs them on the ear. Their response can be summed up in the language of Artemus Ward: "I don't care much for politics, and all my other habits are clean."

The newsman asked the President how he liked "the game of politics." Quick as a wink Mr. Eisenhower said his questioner was mouthing a "derogatory" phrase. Being President, Ike conceded, is "a very fascinating experience." Grimacing, he added: "But the word 'politics' . . . I have no great liking for that."

My students, too, wrinkle their noses at the bare sound of the word. I spring it on them the first day they enter my elementary course, Introduction to Government. They are predominantly freshmen and sophomores, the cream of high school graduates. Some day

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they will be voters and civic leaders. That's why, as a political scientist, I am professionally interested in their responses. For years, dating back to the early '40's when I was an apprentice tutor working for a doctorate at Yale, I have run my own "public opinion" surveys, polling my classes periodically to keep abreast of the political thinking of young Americans. The "politics" question is one of my perennials.

"I'm going to mention a word," I say to them, "and I'd like you to jot down your first thoughts on hearing it. Don't sign your names. Feel free to write anything. . . . The word is 'politics'."

Responses never vary. A scattering of students attempt a definition. A few others scribble terms like "government," "candidates," and "elections." But most rip off comments which betray considerable feeling. They pepper notesheets with "a dirty business" and similar pejoratives. "When I hear that word I feel like spitting." "Wire-pulling and underhanded dealings." "Dog eat dog." "Where connections count more than ability." "Corruption, graft, dirt." "It stinks." And so on.

The practitioner of politics—the "politician"—is assaulted with the same basic English. He is mauled and smeared with the students' favorite political adjective, "dirty." "The politician will do anything, no matter how dirty, to get what he's after." "If you call me a politician, smile." "Slings the dirt to harm others, boost himself." "Swindler." "Big stomach, big cigar, big promises, big wind—dirty guy." "When he's around, better hold your nose."

Why do collegians respond this way? Is their attitude the disillusionment born of knowledge? Hardly. Time and again I have ascertained, by simple identification tests, that the vast majority are ignorant of the most elementary facts of life in current American politics.

The students know next to nothing about the principles and arguments involved in, say, the Bricker Amendment or Point Four or Dixon-Yates. They are stumped if you ask them what "communism" means. "Parity prices"? Students have said these are connected with "betting on racehorses" and with "dues in a golf club." They have defined "atomic fallout" as "disagreement between U.S. and Russia over atoms" and "something in the air that drops and messes up your car" and "atom bombs falling out of airplanes by accident."

They cannot identify the names of much publicized and powerful officials. When I quizzed some two hundred not long ago I drew an

almost complete blank on Arthur Radford, Walter George, Edward Corsi, Oveta Culp Hobby, Lewis Strauss, Arthur V. Watkins and Scott McLeod, even though these individuals had been lately at the storm center of furious and extended controversies. The great majority hadn't the foggiest notion as to the identity of Sherman Adams, Averell Harriman, Harold Stassen, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., William O. Douglas and others high in public life. Remember the Great Spectacular of 1954 sponsored by the Senate and the Army? Except for Wisconsin's junior Senator the cast, to them, was altogether strange and obscure, like spear carriers in a DeMille battle scene.

True, many students recognize *some* of the eminent names in politics—almost as quickly as they do pinup girls and nightclub cuties. Seven out of ten know enough to whistle when Clare Boothe Luce is mentioned. Still, her repute is not as great as Dorothy Dandridge's and I have had an occasional student guess that she was a Red spy. A similar proportion of students demonstrate familiarity with William F. Knowland. His name, more than any other, activates adrenal glands: "ship the so-and-so back to Chiang," "fanatic from California," "should be Senator from Formosa," "would like to drag us into war," "Ike's big opponent," etc. More than 80 per cent of my students in Ohio can say who John Bricker is—almost as many as know about Gina Lollabrigida.

John Foster Dulles, distinguishable to 93 per cent, is practically as famous as "Christine" Jorgensen. Richard M. Nixon, identifiable by 98 per cent, is a match for Grace Kelly though not quite for Jane Russell. Several political figures, known to virtually all the students, stand with Marilyn Monroe at the very summit of celebrity. Those who reach this rarefied atmosphere are Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harry S. Truman, and Joseph R. McCarthy.

Politicians thus recognized are few and far between. Over 92 per cent of these collegians don't know Paul Butler from the man in the moon. Among Congressional chieftains John W. McCormack is a nonentity to more than 97 per cent. The renown of Lyndon Johnson, Styles Bridges and Joseph W. Martin is scarcely greater, having filtered through the Pigskin Curtain to a skimpy handful—probably campus eggheads who read as far as the front page.

Any way you look at it the collegians' attitude to politics is decidedly cold—hostility here, suspicion, contempt or indifference there,

fortified by ignorance almost always. *Why* do our young men and women hold in disrepute, unworthy of attention or esteem, a vocation much regarded in other times and places?

Is corruption the answer? Fundamentally, no. Apart from clichés, our students are no better informed on this aspect of politics than on others. Anyway, if corruption is the answer the ill fame of politics should be more nearly universal. We Americans have no monopoly on this type of enterprise. Far from it. But we *are* ahead of other people in scorning the name of politics.

Besides, if corruption is the answer, why is the politician in the doghouse by himself? He should have lots of company. "If there were no businessmen to hand out home freezers, mink coats and costly vacations," a president of the national Chamber of Commerce has observed, "there would be fewer public officials ready to take them." A president of the N.A.M. has urged: "Let us not forget that it takes two to make a deal and let us condemn just as readily the business or professional men on the other end of the corrupt bargains." Fair advice? Then why do we continue making the politician the fall guy?

Corruption no doubt is a branch of the problem but it certainly is not the root. Well, how about the miserable salaries we pay most of our officials? The inhuman load of campaign expenses? Don't these scare away quite a few good people from seeking office? Don't they make it easy for a politician to accept money from dubious sources, thus breeding corruption and further debasing politics? Unquestionably they do. But they, too, are symptoms, effects, contributory rather than basic causes of the politician's shame.

Otherwise, why don't we do something about these frightful conditions? Why do we, instead, make legislators as jumpy as kids in the neighbor's melon patch whenever they touch the salary problem? Why not take the politician off the hook? Why, on the contrary, do we compel a man to risk name and honor if he shows gumption enough to run for office?

The answer is that our culture is hostile to the politician's calling. My students have been conditioned to respond to "politics" as a dirty word. They haven't had their mouths soaped for saying it, but other influences give the word a bad taste nonetheless. "The strange antipathy to politics . . . permeates the social environment of our young people," as Arthur T. Vanderbilt, Chief Justice of New Jersey, has

noted. "This antipathy is reflected in the home, the church and the school."

The origins of this antipathy are the circumstances, traits and traditions most of us cherish: the equalitarian and fluid nature of our social system, our wealth of opportunity for personal initiative and material success, our belief in freedom and mistrust of authority, our fundamental agreement on a way of life. These, not the character of our politicians, primarily account for the humiliation of politics. Other infamies, like corruption, follow. Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him.

The vocation of politics is most respected where, as in England, it was once the privilege of an aristocracy. This class—noblemen and gentry, the spawn of feudalism—despised the pursuits of the marketplace. Their pastimes, as gentlemen of leisure, ran to statecraft and law, diplomacy and war. From common folk these aristocrats commanded deference which, in turn, exalted their occupations. They made it traditional to think of politics in terms of civic honor, public service, pride and duty. American politics, on the other hand, has not been glorified by an aristocracy. Our society experienced no feudal epoch and inherited no governing class. One after another the Puritan oligarchs, the colonial Tories, the rich and wellborn Federalists, the slave-and-cotton gentry strove to fill the gap. But Americans rebuffed *noblesse oblige*. Their worldly hopes were confident, their social relations mutable, their equalitarian sentiments pugnacious.

While history denied Americans the kind of traditions that ennoble politics, circumstances fostered goals and values that degrade it. Masters of a rich and wide domain, uncramped by ancestral molds, Americans gave themselves up to acquisition and accumulation. In time they developed, as de Tocqueville saw, an "intense and exclusive anxiety to make a fortune." Increasingly they looked upon "the discharge of political duties" as "a troublesome impediment, which diverts them from their occupations and business."

The businessman rather than the politician became the culture's dominant symbol of worth-while and honorable endeavor. Few vied with him for this distinction—not dynasts or landed barons, not conquistadors, clerics or scholars. Americans saw in him the virtues which their situation and opportunities called for. He was the "practical" man, the go-getter, the manipulator of tools and things. They admired,

and envied, his Midas touch. He was the living image of success. His example taught youths to spend on trade and industry their talents, energies and ambitions.

The vocation of politics was disparaged and defamed. Measured by business standards, it was poor business. The opportunity for wealth clamored at every door. Could any *honest* man have an interest in public office? None at all, except the second-raters, the impractical and eccentric sort, the lazy and unaspiring. In the Gilded Age these views became gospel, literally. Clergymen preached them from the pulpit. "You ought to get rich," they exhorted young Americans. "It is your Christian and godly duty. . . . It is *prima facie* evidence of littleness to hold public office." Russell H. Conwell, peripatetic Baptist minister who spoke these words more than six thousand times during half a century of missionary zeal, was but one of many. All over the land, generation after generation, this gospel of wealth, as Andrew Carnegie termed it, was spread by a host of evangels—not only ecclesiastics but business magnates, college presidents, school teachers, writers, other molders of taste and opinion. The impact on our national attitude to politics has been profound, pervasive and enduring.

As the pecuniary spirit marched from triumph to triumph it made politics, too, one of its satrapies. Indeed nothing profane or sacred escaped its power. Churchmen, as just noted, entered its battalion. Nowadays, in fact, religious broadcasts promote the sale of iceboxes and toilet tissues. Philanthropy? Charity drives have been turned over to professional pitchmen on a commission basis. No wonder politics also surrendered to business calculations. Men of a certain entrepreneurial stripe, their commercial instincts challenged, sacrificed their psychic incomes for the sake of converting public service into a "practical" proposition. They would take the cash and let the credit go. How far politics can be assimilated to the categories and preconceptions of the countinghouse has been suggested by a one-time Tammany ward-heeler:

"My party's in power, and it's goin' to undertake a lot of public improvements. Well, I'm tipped off, say, that they're going to lay out a new park at a certain place and I buy up all the land I can in the neighborhood. Then the board of this or that makes its plan public, and there is a rush to get my land. Ain't it perfectly honest to charge a good price and make a profit on my investment and fore-

sight? Wouldn't you? It's just like lookin' ahead on Wall Street or in the coffee or cotton market."

As the businessman embodies one influence derogating politics, the little kid who sasses the cop on the corner represents another. He typifies the national attitude toward minions of authority. Americans are bred to contempt of Old World hocus-pocus about the State, divine-right government and similar mystification. They are schooled in traditions libertarian and rationalistic—traditions shaped to eloquence by Locke and Jefferson, hardened by the ordeals of revolution, confirmed time after time on the frontier. Americans meet their officials man to man, sometimes with a touch of impudence, often with grudging tolerance, suspicion, even hostility. These attitudes have rubbed off on the politician.

So have the effects of *laissez faire* theory, long attractive to a people biased against authority. Besmirchment of politics is always a prime tactic of this theory's spokesmen. Earliest of these were frontiersmen and agrarian radicals whose vision of Utopia was a world made clean of tax-collectors, lawyers, bankers and politicians. Originally, businessmen agreed with Alexander Hamilton, their greatest champion, that *laissez faire* was "a wild speculative paradox." But with the coming of manhood suffrage they discovered eminent wisdom in this doctrine that government should keep its hands off everything—except for tariffs and things like that. Thereafter they did their best to intensify distaste for politicians. Even a good man is bad in politics, they proclaimed. The Chamber of Commerce, in "A Plea for Inefficiency in Government," told why: "A thoroughly first-rate man in public service is corrosive. He eats holes in our liberties. The better he is and the longer he stays, the greater the danger. If he is an enthusiast—a bright-eyed madman who is frantic to make this the finest government in the world—the black plague is a house pet by comparison."

Such rhetoric notwithstanding, Americans in general have not since the Civil War taken their politics seriously. They don't have to. They are not split by the fundamental differences, group against group and class against class, which deeply gash and inflame the body politic elsewhere. They revere the same Constitution, the same way of life. American politics, therefore, is penny-ante. No matter how the cards run, the stakes of an election are so small nobody risks a heavy loss.

The losers muster a smile, congratulate the winners and hope for better luck next time. The contest is usually so tame that most Americans find baseball more exciting. These circumstances, combined with those already cited, operate to the politician's disadvantage.

His services go unappreciated. With the blood pressure of politics so low—with fundamental unity, basic contentment, tolerance and moderation the norm—the politician suffers from ingratitude. Americans, in their failure to credit his accomplishments, are like the man who is seldom sick and hasn't much use for the doctor. They experience so few political maladies—especially of the deep internal sort that convulse other nations—they don't quite know what the politician is good for.

Yet who does more to maintain our political health? Admittedly, the politician is an opportunist, a trimmer, a fixer. Perhaps he is, as Lincoln was described, "scheming, contriving, manipulating." He *has* to be. His tasks compel it. To win effective support he must woo diverse and divergent interests. Hence he works at easing group tensions. He coaxes people to tolerate and compromise differences. He seeks the terms on which they are willing to live and let live. All this he does under social pressures far greater than those in any other occupation. Who serves society better?

When we slander the politician we damage ourselves. His tasks deserve the best brains and talents we possess. But the defamation of politics drives able men and women away from public service. It thwarts effective remedy of those running sores—low official salaries and high campaign costs. In this and other ways it fosters the spread of corruption. It perpetuates that "fantastic system under which we treat our politicians as unsavory characters while at the same time we charge them with preserving our very civilization."

"Fantastic" is right. Philip Graham, Washington publisher, thus expresses a growing concern of civic-minded Americans. Another Paul Revere sounding the alarm is Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon who deems the vilification of politics "one of the nation's basic problems." Still another, Judge Arthur Vanderbilt, has been the prime mover in the Citizenship Clearing House formed in recent years to encourage participation in politics by youths of ability. Financed by the Falk Foundation, manned by political scientists serving unpaid, the Clearing House brings college students face to face with live

politicians for informal conversation. Few collegians with this experience go on thinking "politics" is a dirty word. But the Clearing House cannot do the job alone.

What else can be done? Thomas Jefferson had an idea worth considering. Democracy's main defense, he believed, is an educational system which trains alert, informed, public-spirited citizens. If Jefferson was right, our academic institutions fail lamentably. "Millions of political ignoramuses are graduated from our high schools and colleges each year," Dr. George Gallup testifies. "Any student," he adds, "can graduate from virtually any college in the country today and not have a basic knowledge of . . . our government." This is a national scandal. Why don't our academic administrators and curriculum composers wake up and do something about it? If they don't, then, as a Clearing House report suggests, "it may make little difference what else they do." Perhaps instruction in American government should be required for high school and college graduation. This won't revolutionize the national attitude to politics, but it might jar the underprops now provided by ignorance. In any event, it is time school authorities gave the problem attention.

Taking the curse off politics will require the help of others too. Teachers, after all, can do little directly about the seven parents in ten who would rather see their children sweep streets than enter politics. Or about a President of the United States who denigrates his current profession. To cope with this prejudice—and to inspire public support of party finance—Philip Graham has come forth with an interesting and promising proposal. Why not employ that "new and vitally useful social tool," public service advertising? In a hundred different causes—prodding lazy voters, selling victory bonds, battling forest fires, slashing traffic mishaps, erecting blood banks—this tool has proved its cutting edge.

Who would wield it for politics? The Advertising Council, Mr. Graham urges. A nonprofit, nonpartisan agency, the Council administers annually $100,000,000 in public service advertising donated by businessmen. "Through television, magazines, radio, newspapers, billboards, car cards—even match boxes—the average decent American could be reminded again of the importance of good government. Of how good government depends on each citizen's supporting, as he can, the party or candidate of his choice. And by doing this," Mr.

Graham points out, "we can gain the larger objective of giving public recognition to the fact that there should be no more noble calling in a free society than that of public life."

Were such a campaign launched the Council and its sponsors could, I feel certain, count on the wholehearted co-operation of the country's political scientists. The Council might call for aid and advice from the American Political Science Association which many times has demonstrated its readiness to serve a public cause.

Of course our prejudice against politics will not yield to gimmicks or pass overnight. It is too deeply ingrained in national habit and tradition. "Politics" is still a dirty word despite recent countervailing influences: the widely distributed and popular beneficences of the welfare state, the dwindling of predators such as Tammany whelped in its heyday, the greater number of capable graduates drawn to the career services, the tours of duty by persons of acknowledged stature from business and other nongovernmental fields, the example of high-minded candidates like Eisenhower and Stevenson, the efforts of civic groups like the Citizenship Clearing House.

Ultimately, the tortoise-paced power of education, applied unremittingly, is the best hope for a basic change in outlook. Perhaps, like old soldiers, the prejudice will never die but simply fade away. If that time ever comes we may take our cue from Elihu Root:

"Politics is the practical exercise of self-government, and somebody must attend to it if we are to have self-government. *The principal ground of reproach against any American citizen should be that he is not a politician.*"

The Mystic Presences

By SAMUEL YELLEN

As for Eliot Wentworth, whose dismissal (or rather, to employ precise legalistic jargon, failure of reappointment) agitated our faculty last spring, I happen to be in a position to say that, once the sequence of events was set going, the poor bastard never had a chance. Indeed, unwittingly I was the trigger mechanism that started the chain reaction. Of course, when the inevitable moment came, we went through all the prescribed motions of considering his case objectively, weighing the evidence carefully, and forming an impartial judgment. There is, after all, no place like a university for going through all the motions simply to arrive at a foregone conclusion. And, I suppose, it is only fair to add that a few naïfs among us actually have faith in the motions. Nevertheless, the outcome was as predetermined as if young Eliot Wentworth were the pawn of Fate, Destiny, the Norns, the Will of Heaven, Kismet, Character, Heredity, Instinct, Circumstance, the Unconscious, or any other of the mystic presences man has invented to justify his own blunders and mishaps. But then, my view should be taken at a discount. Not without a modicum of truth, Eliot used sardonically to call me Prof Harry Sanders That Lovable Old Cynic.

No doubt I might have tossed a monkey wrench into the Wheel of Fortune. As chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, I could have insisted that Eliot be kept on. I had nothing to lose. I am sixty-three, only scant years from retirement. An old bachelor, having given no hostages and having put money in my purse, I could have forced the issue. And for a while, I must admit, I was

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foolishly tempted. When you get along in years and have no family, you are a lonely man. It was as if I had suddenly been presented with a brilliant son and a charming daughter-in-law to fuss over me. Eliot and his wife Sharon had youth and freshness. They pumped vitamins into me. They were an elixir, a fire where I could warm myself. However, good sense won out. Sure, I could have rammed Eliot down the Dean's throat. But the Dean would never have promoted him, and the poor bastard would have remained the perennial assistant professor growing the long sharp nose of disappointment. Besides, in the final analysis, the Dean was right.

It is the law in Yarmouth, Carlyle once wrote, that every herring hang by its own head. I am perfectly ready to hang by mine. Yes, the responsibility lies with me. In fact, not only was I the unwitting trigger mechanism, but, as you will see, when it came right down to it, *I* cast the deciding vote. I could have made the fight and got Eliot his tenure. On the other hand, if I *were* misjudging the Dean's temper, the whole affair might have blown up in our faces.

How can you convince the unknowing public that the linen you are washing may be just slightly soiled? Or that a kind of experiential wisdom resides in the cultural pattern which rejects someone like Eliot? Yes, I could have raised a mighty fuss. And all for what? To get Eliot a tenure contract. These days all you hear about is tenure, as if it were the passport to Zion. Well, I may not be lovable, but I guess I am an old cynic. In *theory*, once you are on tenure, you cannot be dismissed except after open trial, and only on charges of treason, immorality, or incompetence. However, there are more ways than one of skinning a professor. As for the sense of security that tenure is alleged to give you, I can refer you to the pleasantry current on our campus: you spend your thirties worrying about the treason clause, your forties worrying about the immorality clause, your fifties worrying about the incompetence clause, and your sixties worrying about retirement.

No, the essential point was that Eliot was still at an age, thirty-two, when I could get him another berth. Provided, obviously, that he departed without too much of a stink. Besides, I realized that I myself had been guilty of a stupid mistake. Indeed, two stupid mistakes. In the *affaire Wentworth*, the original sin was probably mine. With those three syllables *probably*, I pay my respects to the factor of Eliot's

personality, to the ever-present variables, *and* to the mystic presences. Thank God for *probably*. Even with that sedative, I lost many a night's sleep. After all, even a lovable old cynic knows when he has behaved shabbily.

* * *

I recall the cold bright morning last January when Eliot dropped into my office to exchange amiable insults. On an impulse, which I was soon to regret, I tossed a folder across the desk. It was instantly recognizable as one of those folders descending upon a chairman like a flock of birds each spring, containing the photograph, the official transcripts and credentials, and the weary letters of recommendation, sent out by the graduate schools peddling their latest crop of Ph.D.'s. This one, from Chicago, was a very early robin indeed. And for good reason. The candidate happened to be a Negro, and they were going to need plenty of time to place him. If ever.

"How about hiring *this* baby," I asked prankishly, "and changing the complexion of the department?"

As soon as Eliot looked at the photograph and saw the Negroid face, he said in an acid voice, "And Laughter holding both his sides."

That was his favorite comment on a bad joke or an ornate piece of pedantry. It was one of the things I rather liked about him. He was refreshing. (*Fresh!* my colleagues would snort.) Agreed that Eliot sometimes rubbed us the wrong way. He *did* rub through the incrustation of the stale, the pretentious, the solemnly timid. And another thing. How many of our sociologists could have thrown out a verse from Milton? As Eliot stood there with the cold flat morning light on his long narrow face, I found myself contrasting him with our standard product. He was no slave to the professional cliché, and he *had* done some reading. Nowadays we no longer read Hobbes, Locke, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Aristotle, even Sumner and Boas. All we read is one another's textbooks, monographs, and reprints. Reproduction by cross-sterilization! Well, well, my dotage must be upon me. Forgive this digression into an old-fashioned viewpoint.

When I saw how seriously engrossed Eliot was in the folder, I realized that I had blundered. With an offhand manner, I tried to take it from him. But he merely frowned, stepped back, and went on with his study. Somewhat annoyed with him (and myself too), I

beheld him at his least attractive. Certainly his posture would have taken no prizes. Not quite six feet in height, spindly, his shoulders stooped, his chest collapsed, he looked consumptive. And his *clothes!* He was apt, as on that morning, to be wearing *black* shoes (unshined) with a *brown* suit (unpressed). His head, however, compelled attention. Nose and chin were firmly cut. Thick brownish-black hair parted on one side and a heavy tangle of eyebrow deepened the swarthiness of the face. And dark brown eyes looked out from under the drooping eyelids with a quizzical irreverence, an irreverence arising, as I had come to understand, not out of personal bitterness, but rather out of a need to shield his own honesty in a world of sham and cant. Without the mockery of his eyes, his face would have seemed saturnine, almost sullen. What never failed to astonish me was that this unpolished specimen had done both his undergraduate work and his doctorate at *Princeton!*

By every token, he should have enjoyed an immediate academic success. His training was excellent, his mind keen. His very name and family should have been a warrant of soundness. And yet, even though the market was tight, Michigan had given him the heave-ho after the customary three-year probation. Three years are, of course, time enough for the man's slip to show. Perhaps my colleagues had been right in questioning his appointment. Perhaps their doubts had been more than a rationalization of their fears for their little baliwicks. Perhaps that sixth sense of the academic world had detected the unreliable, the non-conformist, the odor of the stake. I could readily understand why Michigan had unloaded him, however reluctantly. Was it, indeed, wise to take a chance when you could procure the safe article? And Eliot was difficult. He was not quite the do-gooder so abhorred by present-day sociologists, but he *was* the gadfly type, even if he did lack the unpleasant self-congratulatory air which so many of that type have. To add to the difficulty, a small trust fund gave him an income which, while not sufficient for a man with a wife and child to flourish on, was just enough to deprive him of the useful virtue of docility ordinarily bestowed upon one by the providence of financial exigency. For instance, he spoke up his convictions brusquely, without paying the small toll of hesitation, circumlocution, and qualification demanded by academic propriety. As on that January morning.

"Say, this fellow really *is* first-rate," he said, looking up from the folder. "You've got to hire him, Harry."

"Now hold your horses," I said with an uneasy laugh. "You know we can't hire a Negro."

"Why not?"

"Don't be infantile, Eliot! Do I have to point out to you that this is not Liberia, but the good old U.S.A.?"

"Do I have to point out to the eminent Prof Sanders that this is a university, not a country club? We've even got a couple on the basketball team."

I sighed. I knew I was in for it. "Listen to reason, Eliot. The great day hasn't dawned yet. You don't go out and hire a Negro the way you buy a standing rib roast. You've got to look at the broader picture."

That last *was* a fatuous remark, and I suppose I deserved Eliot's grimace of disgust. "For Christ's sake, Harry, you're not going to turn into a goddamned administrator right before my eyes!"

Nevertheless, the grimace and the words stung, and I committed my second blunder. "Where have you been the last two and a half years?" I demanded sharply. "I thought I hired a trained *anthropologist*, not a starry-eyed English professor. Haven't you been observing the mores around you? May I inquire whether you have ever seen a Negro in one of our local barbershops? Or in one of our local restaurants?"

I stopped short. For looking at Eliot's face, I instantly realized that the poor innocent had *not* noticed. And for once, he was speechless. He was in a state of moral shock. It was clearly a case of "came the light." His eyes had been opened.

* * *

Of course, once Eliot created that scene in Corbin's and then got himself interviewed by the local newspaper, his doom was sealed. In the life scholastic, the only public scene you create is to read a paper at the American Sociological Society, and the only interview you give is to the New York *Times*, whose liturgical style swaddles all improprieties. While I was myself not a witness to the scene in Corbin's, I had a detailed account from a colleague who happened to be there; and having also twice by chance been present at similar scenes, I can easily picture what took place.

Let us set the stage. Occupying a fine, old, red brick house, Corbin's is the most elegant restaurant in town, listed by both Duncan Hines and A.A.A., with a refined air and subdued sound, food a little too spiritualized for my taste, and Corbin himself always on the premises playing the character part of mine host. Enter, at about six-thirty, the height of the dinner hour, Eliot, pale with resolution, accompanied by an extremely nervous Negro graduate student in Music who (poor bastard) has been persuaded to undergo this public humiliation on behalf of his people. Follows the stage business of craning of necks by the diners, among whom are some of the town's leading citizens. Corbin bustles forward to Eliot: "I'm very sorry, sir, but we're just about to close for the evening, and we're not seating any more patrons." Meanwhile, the waitresses, on cue, turn off the outside lights and pull down the front window shades. That was Corbin's effective way of dealing with this kind of situation. He would remain imperturbably polite and bland in the face of all protests, and he would lock the front door and surrender whatever business might yet have come to him that evening.

As Walter Scott remarked, a pedagogue is a man among boys and a boy among men. By bad luck, the boy Eliot had stumbled among men. The local sheet, as we all know, is the tool of the Democratic machine. Its editor was happy to be given this opportunity to embarrass not only the university, but also the Governor of the State, a Republican whose reëlection depended on the large Negro vote in the industrial centers. Such are the sordid details. No one but Eliot was surprised to discover his interview about the incident in Corbin's boxed on page one in 14-point boldface. Eliot trotted out the usual platitudes and put them through their paces to remind us that our great Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens of the state, regardless of race, creed, or color. Even as I squirmed, I could not help being entertained at observing how the individual had been submerged in the role. The interview did not sound like Eliot at all. It sounded like any Indignant Liberal.

You may wonder whether I am not doing young Eliot an injustice. Having resided for only two short years in a community with an extravagantly ramified structure (plus the superimposed stresses of town and gown), how was he to be cognizant of all the boxes within boxes and wheels within wheels? But, after all, he *was* an anthro-

pologist, with a brain and 20-20 vision. I must confess to a certain disappointment in him. Sent out to do a study of an Indian tribe, he would have come back smelling like a wigwam and loaded down with penetrating notes. Nonetheless, in his own everyday surroundings he proved to be as unobservant as a medieval mystic contemplating his own navel. There must be some anticatalyst in the university medium which retards the process of maturation. Take a salesman, a lawyer, or a candlestickmaker at age thirty-two. He would not have fallen into that error. Even after a casual reading of the newspapers, he would have been aware of the local folkways and of the political set-up. And he would have known that while our Board of Regents might overlook a moderate amount of immorality and a rather sizable amount of incompetence, it would not overlook violations of the first of the academic commandments: Don't be a troublemaker.

The day the interview appeared, I called Eliot into my office and we came as close to a stormy scene as I have ever come. "What precisely did you hope to accomplish by that silly business at Corbin's?" I demanded.

Eliot, looking sallow and strained, smiled at me for a moment before replying. "Put it down to heedless misguided youth, Harry. Someone has to get the old mule Society moving."

"I must say, Eliot, that the gadfly type has always been a puzzle to me. Indeed, I might well have voted to give Socrates the hemlock, if only to get rid of a public nuisance. How can an otherwise sensible person, mindful of the multiplicity of our social forces and the complexity of their interplay, presume to attempt to put the world in joint and make a fictive Justice prevail?"

"That, gentlemen, is the question before us," said Eliot drily.

I snorted my annoyance. "Eliot Wentworth, one of God's angry men!"

"No, Harry," he said quietly. "I don't enjoy being a public spectacle, and I think I know what I may be in for. But I can't help myself. I can't just stand by. I guess I'm one of those for whom the bell tolls. Some he made beasts of the field, and some he made fowls of the air."

"Okay. I admit we're not alike. I suppose that ultimately, unless you go in for the Freudian claptrap, it must come down to a problem

in physiology. Given the right sort of test tube, flask, and Bunsen burner, one could work out the reaction that generates such a head of steam. But that question still plagues me: What did you hope to accomplish?"

"It all depends on whether you believe in social progress. *Someone* has to stir things up to prevent paralysis from setting in." Then he smiled mockingly. "At the very least, I added a little drama to the drab existence of the administration."

That last crack made me cross. "Now who do you think battles with the Legislature for your salary check, and stands between you and all the bigots and jackasses in the state? You might recollect that elementary law of society, the Law of the Fleas. Big fleas have little fleas. Conversely, little fleas dwell on big fleas. I carry you, the Dean carries me, the President carries the Dean. Equal rights is just a parcel of words to you. The poor bastard out there on the firing line is the President."

"Sure, sure," Eliot replied impatiently. "That's what he gets paid a princely stipend for."

* * *

The scene in Corbin's, I remember, occurred on a Wednesday evening, and the interview appeared on Thursday. The following Monday morning I received a phone call from Dean Hendricks inviting me to have lunch with him. I had been expecting that call. I could imagine the conferences over the week-end between him and the President, between the President and the Publicity Director, and very likely between the Governor and one or two of the Regents. That noon I met the Dean at the Faculty Club and we took a table to ourselves in the Ship, over against the sloping timbers between the farthest porthole and the elaborately spoked wheel. Spawned by the daydream of a landlocked architect, the Ship would have foundered in Farmer Brown's Pond, the only body of water in our vicinity. However, there, amid the ship's lanterns, the captain's chairs, the carved bas-relief of winches and capstans, and the other nautical accoutrements, the faculty entertained visiting firemen and the Dean broached delicate matters with departmental chairmen.

Although the Dean is exactly my age, you wouldn't guess it. If I say so myself, he looks like an old man. As he sat across the table

from me, the bald head with the red-rimmed eyes and the raw wrinkled neck sticking up above the white collar put me in mind of an ancient buzzard. Our conversation proceeded in accordance with immemorial practice, each topic keeping pace with a course in the luncheon. Thus Saturday night's basketball game came in with the vegetable soup; and the prospects for an early golf season, with the veal birds. Eliot came in rather abruptly with the dessert.

"Sanders, did you know Wentworth was going to put on that restaurant act?"

"Of course not, Dean. Wouldn't I have stopped him?"

The Dean studied me severely for a moment. "I don't need to tell you that it has caused the President considerable embarrassment. It couldn't have come at a worse time." He paused to swallow a spoonful of cherry-colored gelatin, then went on in a lowered tone. "What I'm about to tell you is in the strictest confidence. I hope that business of Wentworth's doesn't upset the apple cart. It has caught us in the middle of rather delicate negotiations." His voice trailed off, as though he had suddenly thought better of letting me in on the top secret.

In vain did I search those watery faded blue eyes. Were there really negotiations? And if so, what were they? Or was the old buzzard simply bamboozling me? I have to acknowledge that I was no match for the Dean. Not only did he have all the advantage of status, but his veined relic of a face rebuffed every attempt of mine to read it. However, I did surmise how the Dean's remarks were going to conclude. By now I could do a definitive treatise on the ritualistic expressions accompanying the academic sacrifice.

"What kind of a fellow is Wentworth anyway?" he asked, as he took out a cigarette. I was already busy filling my pipe.

"Well, Dean, he's not a genius. How many geniuses have we got? But he *is* the most promising young anthropologist I've come across in several years."

The Dean lit his cigarette and then turned his bleached eyes on me. "I wonder if he isn't going to turn out to be a troublemaker." With that, poor Eliot was as effectively sacrificed as if an Aztec priest had torn out his bleeding heart and held it up still beating for the multitudes to behold.

If I go on with this story, it is because, notwithstanding its already ascertainable denouement, it holds a roadside interest. There is a resemblance here to watching a Greek tragedy. While we fully know the destiny in store for the protagonist, yet the actual working out of that destiny is attended by fascinating variations and surprises. And there were even a few surprises for *me*, even though I was, in a sense, the agent of the Fate calling the turns.

Towards the end of February, I held the customary meeting of our six full professors in the department to pass on promotions, new appointments, and dismissals. Ordinarily, had I been seeking someone's promotion, I would have had them over to the house during the evening, with a good blaze in the fireplace and a decanter of Scotch to soften the resentments and grudges which had accumulated in their very human breasts over the months. But this time I called the meeting for a Saturday morning, and in our seminar room. Aside from the irritation of giving up a Saturday morning to departmental business, I wanted those cheerless bare walls painted an institutional tan and the scratched dusty table and floor to work upon them. Alas, such are the petty dodges a chairman must employ to bring about the decision he knows to be in the best interest of his department. Of course, I had prudently made some preliminary calculations of how the vote might go, and I was fairly positive that Eliot would be dismissed (or rather, not rehired) by a count of four to two. That would have been most agreeable to me, since it would have spared me the unpleasantness of casting a deciding vote and would have made it possible for me (with a decent display of reluctance) to bow to the judgment of my staff. But I was not to be spared.

As I sat at one end of the table that morning and looked around at my colleagues, I felt like a clumsy craftsman surrounded by his botchwork. How had I in my sixteen years as chairman managed to get together so sorry a collection? I remember Eliot saying to me after the first occasion when he met the full professors all together, "Man, you sure can pick 'em! Where'd you get the *menagerie*?"

Rather huffily I retorted, "We may not be Princeton or Columbia, but that's as good a group of men as you'd find at any of our sister institutions."

"Oh, sister!" Eliot cried.

And I couldn't help laughing. It was, in part, their appearance.

I sometimes wonder by what malicious handiwork we academics turn into such freaks. What intaglio process makes the smooth young flesh sink in with the years to bring into sharp relief the hidden quirks, cranks, and crazes, and transform us into caricatures of ourselves? Well, I suppose I'm no beauty either. However, what dejected me as I looked around the table was the thought of how much talent had leaked out somewhere along the way. Here were men expertly trained and able enough, yet what a disappointment when measured against their early promise. What had happened? Why had they dribbled away (yes, and sold out) their gifts for such trifling gains? Browning's Andrea del Sarto would have shaken his head sadly at them. Their grasp had far exceeded their reach.

The good Lord deliver me from being judged by a jury of my colleagues. I have sat on too many such juries and seen the mystic presences of Academe operate (fortunately, as chairman, above the fray). I have watched spite, rancor, jealousy, guile, jobbery, self-approval, and self-righteousness assert themselves through the thin disguises. Oh, we do no worse unto one another than we are done by! And yet, unbelievable as it may seem, one factor somehow cancels out another, a proper balance is achieved, and generally a sound verdict is reached. As in the case of the University vs. Assistant Professor Eliot Wentworth. Two votes came through for Eliot according to expectation, those of Jolliffe and MacPherson. Jolliffe is our Crime and Social Disorganization man. Even Eliot, who had originally dubbed him the Hairless Jesus, had come to respect him. How that mild spirit succeeds in getting along with murderers, dope fiends, second-story artists, counterfeiters, grifters, prison wardens, and hard-boiled cops is the everlasting marvel of our university administration. Of all the professional Christians I have known, he is the sole exemplar of the meek and lowly of heart. Had Eliot been a safe-cracker or an imbecile, he would still have had Jolliffe's vote. As for MacPherson, our Anthropologist, he is a blunt pragmatic Scotchman, who was then just back, gaunt and brown, from another of his expeditions to Yucatan. With his acquired tolerance for the extremes of human culture and convention, he would not have cared whether Eliot was a polygamist or a cannibal. By yardstick and abacus, he had computed Eliot's published articles as he might have measured a pyramid or a cranium. And the resulting figures had proved fully adequate.

I had, of course, written off those two votes. They were easy enough to predict. The great surprise, and indeed embarrassment, for me was furnished by Atkinson (Social Theory). In this instance a bookie could have made a killing. I would have offered odds of 20 to 1 that Atkinson would howl out a bitter *No*. I am sure that Eliot's epithet "the Bearded Lady" had come to his ears. How he must have paced the floor, straggly beard aquiver, before he could swallow his mortification and render a just verdict. (Or, as the lovable old cynic in me suggests, did he cast that vote for Eliot out of hostility to *me* and what he thought *I* might wish?) Well, admirable as this triumph of the human spirit might be, there was no doubt that the Bearded Lady had presented me with an awkward problem. I had come a long way from being permitted to bow reluctantly to the judgment of my staff. I now *had* to have all the three other votes even to be given the chance as chairman to cast the deciding vote. Otherwise, I would be put in the extremely painful position of having to *override* my colleagues in order to get rid of Eliot.

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Luckily, there *is* a certain predictability in human behavior and, aside from one anxious moment, the others came through as I had made book. Take Rausch, our Population and Statistics man. Observing him that Saturday morning, the way a woman might observe her husband after a decade and a half of marriage, I asked myself, "How in the world did Rausch ever look good to me?" He has an overstrained waxen face and a stammer. And he is vain, incredibly so, vain as only a pedant can be. He was my first important appointment; all I can say in my defense is that in his middle thirties he had seemed a brilliant catch and I had had to outbid both Nebraska and Duke for him. However, I had failed to detect the secret core of timidity or insecurity which was later to drive him into a series of safe little articles, an endless succession of inconsequential population studies dug out of the census figures for the counties, towns, and villages of our state. The kind of problem this eminent scholar set for himself was, How do villages under 500 compare with towns between 500 and 2,000 in the percentage of children joining the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts? Or, What percentage of the population of Stark County ranged according to income levels are high-school graduates? Since

our state has a hundred counties and hundreds of towns and villages, these invaluable little studies could go on forever. And did.

It is a sad spectacle. Yet which department cannot boast its Rausch? Most of us on the faculty, when we glance at the long list of titles in his annual bibliography, recognize it as a case of compulsive scholarship, smile tolerantly, and think, "There but for the grace of the great god Neurosis go I." But not Eliot. That *enfant terrible* found it behooved him to ask one afternoon, "Dr. Rausch, what is the percentage of left-handed crapshooters in Elkinsville?" Rausch never forgot that. And when the time came to sit in judgment, he stammered with an earnest mien radiating impartiality, "It's true that Wentworth does have a kind of superficial flair, but do you think his approach to things is really at bottom a scholarly one?" Ah, but those fifty-year-old wattles fluttered with repressed fury.

Another interesting case was Dobbs (Family and Marriage). Dobbs is tall, erect, and clean-cut, an earlier handsomeness casting an air of distinction over his sixties, though his ashen hair has gone very thin. He enjoys a reputation with the ladies, and he dresses elegantly, going in for pearl-gray vests and Homburgs. (Eliot christened him the Clothes Horse.) He is a smooth number and nobody's fool. I remember his once saying to me, after he had been needled by Eliot, "Sure, Harry, you as chairman can afford to have a jester around. But we others at court can't regard him with precisely the same favor." Tracing his initials with his finger tip in the dust of the seminar table, Dobbs also put on the mask of impartiality. What he said was, "I suppose Wentworth is clever enough, but it seems to me that he's dispersing his energies." Now that was good, coming from Dobbs. The only energy *he* disperses is in knocking over the bottle in bottle pool at the Faculty Club. But here again, part of the picture was hidden. I knew what was eating *him*. Sharon! Yes, at a faculty dance she had once turned down a little proposition of his. I knew this because she had confided in me.

That leaves me with Frobisher, who handles our work in Methods. Everyone knows him for my yes man. A tall black-haired fellow in his late forties, with a neat black moustache, Frobisher looks like a foreign diplomat. It is, incidentally, not *me* he yesses, but my status. He would do shameless flip-flops to vote the way His Chairman wishes. And apparently he has worked out a rationale for himself which makes

him impervious to amazed stares and sly smiles. Eliot addressed him once as Mrs. Bloom, to his great mystification, since he had never heard of Joyce nor of that notorious last chapter in *Ulysses*. While I can't say I respect Frobisher any more than his other colleagues do, I must confess that a chairman often finds a yes man extremely useful.

Strangely enough, it was Frobisher who furnished the anxious moment. Indeed, he gave me quite a turn. The trouble was that I neglected to take into account the power of the conditioned reflex. For two years now I had conditioned Frobisher so that Eliot Wentworth's name was the signal for a chant of approval. That is why I was almost caught off base. Taking it for granted that I was all for keeping Eliot, Frobisher launched into his paean: "It seems to me that Wentworth is an extraordinarily bright young man, in many ways just the sort we want to build into a strong department like ours. Of course, the training he got at Princeton is really excellent. And he puts it to good use. I read that last monograph of his, and I must say it's of a quality you'd expect from a much older man." I suppressed a morbid prompting to let Frobisher run on, to see exactly how far he *could* go and still manage to scramble back over to the other side of the fence. But I knew I could not indulge myself, and I arranged my face in a frown. Sensitive as litmus paper, Frobisher reacted instantaneously. I didn't like doing that to him, but it was necessary. Never have I admired his adroitness as much as then. With hardly a pause, he changed pace almost in mid-sentence: "And, nevertheless, good as Wentworth is, the unfortunate fact is that he happens to be in a field where we already are exceptionally strong (this with a half-bow to MacPherson). Perhaps it would, after all, be wisest to let him go elsewhere and to look around for a young man we can try out in one of the other fields."

* * *

As you can see, I had my opportunity to cast the deciding vote. Of course, I was prepared to ride out the inevitable buzzing among the faculty. After all, they recognized a cause-and-effect sequence when they saw one. They had heard about the scene in Corbin's and had read Eliot's interview; now they took note of the failure to reappoint. However, it is not hard to ride out a tempest in the faculty teapot. That is part of a chairman's job. Fortunately, the buzzing is all noise

and no sting. Eliot served as a conversation piece at the Faculty Club and at the spring cocktail parties. There was even a salutary cathartic effect: each speaker was furnished a cloak underneath which he could get his own grievances, real or imagined, off his chest. But despite all the talk and the sympathetic head-shakings, not one went to bat for the poor bastard. And to my surprise, breaking the news to Eliot was not rough at all. In fact, he was *gentle* with me, as though *I* were the one getting the bad news. "If you can take it, Harry," he said, "I can." Whether he was letting me off easy because he liked me or because he felt sorry for me, I couldn't tell. In any case, we got him comfortably settled elsewhere.

But Fate had reserved one last twist. It still remained for Prof Harry Sanders That Lovable Old Cynic to receive a kick in his lovable old rump. I remember that whenever Eliot was about to impart an especially ironic morsel, he used to say, "This one is going to *kill* you!" Well, this one certainly killed *me*. Early last month the faculty assembled in Zoology Hall, appropriately surrounded by the pickled and bottled specimens in the glass cases lining the walls, for its first meeting of the fall semester. That is the occasion on which the various departmental chairmen introduce their new staff members. As I looked around to see what toll the past summer had taken of my colleagues, I was given a shock that sent the blood flaming to my cheeks. There not more than five rows behind me was a *black face!* And not even a brown or tan that might pass for a Hindu, but an uncompromising coal black.

To make matters worse, the black face was right next to Dirks, chairman of Chemistry, and, as everyone knows, a hard-bitten illiberal Republican. Even though I understood how desperate a situation Chemistry confronts these days in procuring staff, I couldn't shake away the fact that Dirks the Republican Chemist had done what Sanders the Sociologist had been too timid to do. I was mortified. What would Eliot think when he found out? Might I, after all, have hired the Negro as he suggested, and spared myself all the heartache and tossing? Or, contrary to my skepticism, had Eliot's little act of provocation produced this result, and had some intimation come down from the Republican Governor to the Republican Chemist? In either case, I felt that I had sacrificed Eliot to a phantom, that the Dean had made a monkey of me. Nor was it merely that my *amour-propre* was

wounded. I suddenly realized how acutely I missed Eliot, and Sharon too. I was an old and lonely man. I *needed* them, their youth, their vigor, their honesty. Even Eliot's mockery had been a tonic to me. I had cheated myself, and at the close of a fairly honorable career had lost my peace of mind to boot.

I explain my reaction at such length only to account for a foolish bit of behavior I might otherwise not have been guilty of. The knife *was* turning in me. Hence it was that a week or so ago when I met the Dean at the Faculty Club I invited him to have lunch with me. We boarded the Ship and sat at that same table between the farthest porthole and the wheel; and we ate veal birds again, from their toughness probably the same hatch we had had before. All the time I was well aware that I was about to do something silly. (If I could really pump Hendricks, would he have got to be Dean?) But I was gripped by an impulse beyond my control. And I suppose I did not improve matters by becoming coy and trying cajolery.

"Dean," I said, "I don't know whether you ever ran across a story called *The Lady, or the Tiger*? It used to be a favorite in high-school English classes."

The Dean looked up at me, nodded, and said, "Frank Stockton." Then he bent his head back to his food.

"Well, you may recall how it ends," I went on. "The reader never does find out whether the poor bastard out there in the arena finally gets the lady or the tiger. Somehow I was put in mind of that story the other day at the faculty meeting when Dirks introduced that new assistant professor of his. Just as a matter of curiosity, Dean, last winter when you and I were talking about Eliot Wentworth, were you already negotiating for the black chemist? Or did Wentworth's little piece of agitation put the heat on and make you look around for one as a political gesture? Come on, Dean, which was it? Just between us girls."

The Dean remained silent, occupied with carving his veal bird. He put a forkful into his mouth and chewed deliberately, looking down at his plate. I counted the number of times those jaws chomped (eleven), and watched the progress of that mouthful as it moved along the raw wrinkled neck and down into the gullet. At last he lifted his relic of a face to mine and regarded me with those watery red-rimmed eyes. And all I got out of the old buzzard was a slow elaborate wink.

The Great Boug-Bear of Academic Painting

By ALFRED WERNER

DON'T RUB THE CHARCOAL WITH YOUR FINGERS—that indicates a careless man," the bush-bearded sturdy grey man scolded the unruly young law clerk from Picardy. "Take a bit of rag . . ." and turning to another student, "Ah, that's better, I see you mind the rules." For he was the famous William Bouguereau who imposed on the students of this private school, the Académie Julian, the same discipline that brought him admiration and dread at the official Ecole des Beaux Arts. The young Henri Matisse waited until "l'affreux (the frightful) Bougre" had moved to a safe distance, and then continued in his own "careless" manner. But he was uneasy until he heard the big door close with a bang, signalling the departure for the day of the man whom he had learned to loathe as an implacable foe of all the new ideas and movements in art.

When, not long ago, Matisse passed away, most obituaries mentioned this bogey, Bouguereau. Curiously, this was also the first mention in many years in the American press of that Eagle of Academic Art who, a half century ago, was Europe's most celebrated artist. (In the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* there is a long piece on Bouguereau, while Cézanne is only briefly mentioned once, in the article on Impressionism, and Gauguin and Van Gogh are omitted altogether.) Today, if he is referred to in books at all, he appears either as the formidable reactionary who succeeded in keeping the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists out of the Salon, or as the teacher who failed to flatten the talents of men like Bonnard, Vuillard, and, of course, Matisse.

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The latter, incidentally, was not the only pupil to state, expressly, that Bouguereau was a wretched pedagogue. In his autobiography the English artist John Lavery recalled some of the empty phrases Bouguereau used after he had been shown young Lavery's drawings from the nude: "Mon ami, c'est comme bois, cherchez le caractère et les valeurs." Acidly Lavery adds: "During the three winters I spent chez Julian I cannot remember being told anything else. The rest of my training came and continued to come from what I saw rather than from what I heard." Among living artists there is probably only one left who had studied with Le Bougre. Here is Jacob Epstein's graphic recollection of Bouguereau, ten years after Matisse's encounter:

> On one occasion I watched (it was more of a spectacle than anything instructive) the great Bouguereau in drawing. The old man, very feeble, would be assisted by two students into his chair and out, and an awed assemblage of French students would follow him. . . . After one or two criticisms from the master at Julian's, I gave up taking criticism, and in my impatience always covered my figure when the master came in. He noticed me doing this one day and referred in an audible tone to "ce sauvage Américain."

As far as Matisse is concerned: had it not been for Bougre's success, Henri might have found it much harder to get his father's permission to take up art as a profession. After all, speculated papa Matisse, a well-to-do grain merchant, had not Bouguereau been made Commander of the Legion of Honor? Was he not fabulously rich, particularly since American collectors had begun to pay fantastic prices for his canvases? Did not engravings from his celebrated oils adorn even the humblest homes of people all over the world? Wealth and fame—his Henri, one day, might become another Bouguereau. . . .

The time was the late fall of 1891. Armed with letters of recommendation, Henri arrived at 75 Rue Notre Dame de Champs, an address everyone in Paris seemed to know. The carriage drive led to a massive gate of elaborately wrought iron, and beyond it to an entrance room from which a staircase led up to a huge studio. Henri gave scant attention to the dusty plaster casts from famous old marbles, but he glanced curiously at the many easels straining under the weight of large canvases, in different stages of progress. Except for a portrait in a corner, the oils all looked alike, in fact, they were more or less alike, the same picture—delectable nudes in slightly differing situa-

tions and positions. The country boy, stunned by the sight of so much enticing flesh, and overawed in the presence of the famous man, slowly moved forward to *le grand maître*, who was busily painting near the enormous bay of glass window. So this short, potbellied sexagenarian who looks like a prosperous businessman—like my own father, for instance—is the great artist about whom there was so much talk even in St. Quentin! And what was he painting? He was copying one of his own paintings—in a highly artificial forest, an equally artificial naked lady was being persecuted by a flock of flying little Cupids who were shooting arrows at her. Fortunately, the lady did not seem unduly alarmed. . . .

The young Matisse quickly noticed something weird in the contrast between this austere-looking, stand-offish old gentleman, whose cold grey eyes warned the neophyte, "No foolishness, please!" and the theme he was painting with the dull regularity of a metronome. The two disliked each other at first sight. Henri did not last long at the Académie Julian. An argument with the master about the dead perfection of form required, ended up with Matisse quitting the school, Bouguereau roaring after him: "You'll never learn how to draw!" Curiously, at least one American critic, Royal Cortissoz of the *Herald Tribune*, felt that Matisse had acted unwisely: after viewing the 1931 Museum of Modern Art one-man show, the critic remarked, bitingly, that Matisse "might profitably have stayed a little longer in the atelier of Bouguereau."

Fifty years ago, any American museum that owned Bouguereaus proudly displayed them; today, there is considerably less enthusiasm about showing them. But Bouguereau's nudes are regularly offered and sold at public auctions, and two or three galleries which specialize in the pseudoromantic and pseudoclassic stuff of late nineteenth-century vintage report that buyers, with $10,000 or more in hand, can be found among a clientele of middle-aged gentlemen who don't know anything about art but know—and can pay for—what they like.

However "forgotten" he may be, together with all those of his disciples who, unlike Matisse, tried to scramble to recognition riding his coattails, Bouguereau was no nonentity. To at least two generations of painters—he lived to be eighty—he represented Academic Art at its best (hardly anyone knew better how to draw "accurately" and how to handle paint so deftly that it will stay on the canvas without de-

terioration until Judgment Day)—and at its worst (rarely has an artist, by sticking to two or three themes throughout his career, and by never trying new methods, never searching for new paths, depersonalized and even devitalized his art to such a frightening extent). The Sunday painter, Henri Rousseau, that sweet soul, innocently regarded Bouguereau as the greatest artist that ever lived; while never hoping to equal him, he eagerly sought to copy his style—fortunately, without succeeding. Van Gogh, suffering from a never-ceasing "inferiority complex," envied Bouguereau, though he could not really admire him: writing to Theo from Arles, Vincent complained about his inability to get sitters, and added, with a sigh: "If I painted prettily like Bouguereau people would not be ashamed to let themselves be painted. . . ."

Manet simply hated Bouguereau who, serving on the salon jury, saw to it that neither he nor any other progressive artist should receive a prize. But Cézanne's feelings were more complicated. When he first came to Paris—thirty years before Matisse—he spoke of Bouguereau and Rubens in the same breath. As he came to recognize the shallowness of the virtuoso's work, he, the slow, awkward man, continued to envy the adroit skill and apparent ease of Le Bougre. Bouguereau was astute enough to realize that the hermit of Aix was a more dangerous subversive than Manet, and kept him completely out of what Cézanne scornfully termed "le Salon de Bouguereau." Cézanne, despite untiring efforts, never did get a canvas into the Salon, but was rewarded, towards the end of his life, by a shift in public opinion. The Caillebotte Bequest—the collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist work, including several Cézannes, assembled by a minor painter and ardent enthusiast—after several turn-downs by the Musée du Luxembourg, was accepted at last. Cézanne did not conceal his glee that his work was now sharing the sacred precincts with those by Bouguereau and his school. This was in 1895. Five years later, at the Centennial Exhibition of the Paris World's Fair, three Cézannes were shown to only one Bouguereau. Those who could see could decipher the handwriting on the wall.

Are we perhaps unfair to Bouguereau because, from early childhood, we have been indoctrinated in "Abstract Art"? It is easy to dismiss Le Bougre as a knave, and the people who adored him and made him rich as fools. Perhaps he himself contributed to this concept

by unguarded remarks like "I hate realism!" or "Every time I leave the easel I lose ten thousand francs," or "I consider it a patriotic duty to conquer the German painters in the very capital of the German empire" (when practically all French painters, still remembering the Franco-Prussian war, refused an invitation to exhibit in Berlin).

But Le Bougre was once young and starry-eyed, too, though not for long. Adolphe William was born in 1825 in the small seaport of La Rochelle, on the Atlantic coast, the son of a purveyor of olive oil. His life is once again reminiscent of a soap opera plot: the father forbidding the boy to become an artist "because that leads to no good end," while the understanding mother dips into the sugar bowl for drawing lessons for him. Somewhere in the city of Bordeaux, where William—he preferred his middle name which his religious parents gave him because they admired British sobriety—worked in a wholesale wine business, he found a drawing teacher willing to give him lessons at six in the morning. At eight his job began; he begged candle ends to work by after the shop closed.

At nineteen he won the Bordeaux Academy's prize for figure painting; the following year, the Prix du Rome, offered by the Beaux Arts School in Paris. At the academy in Rome they nicknamed him Sisyphus for his unceasing labors. One summer he copied all the Giottos at Assisi, plus some of those at Padua. When he came back from Italy, he was, despite his youth, an accomplished master, who could draw better than his teachers, and almost as well as Giulio Romano, Raphael's most accomplished pupil.

We know the self-portrait he painted at the Villa Medicis in Rome—the head of a romantic and idealistic youth. Put it beside the one painted forty years later—the flinty empty face of a bourgeois—and ask what happened.

Bouguereau, for reasons that lay entirely in his character, took the road that was taken by France. Externally, the second Empire was a period of great success and satisfaction, and Napoleon III wanted its arts to express the stability and prosperity of the Empire. Unfortunately, he had not the slightest understanding of the arts, and relied completely on his Minister of Fine Arts, Baron de Nieuwekerke, who was said to know as much about art as a cat knows about music. The Emperor gave his support exclusively to men whose character was not equal to their talents, and who deteriorated along with the society that

bestowed favors upon them. There was Cabanel, whose *Roman Orgy* pessimistically reminded the mid-nineteenth-century Frenchman of the decadence that was the Romans' lot—and who jumped at the chance to become the Court painter of Napoleon III. There was Baudry, the favorite of the Emperor's mistress, Madame de Castiglione—she was so jealous of the portrait Baudry painted of her that she threw it into the fire. Perhaps the most gifted of all was Henner, the "modern Correggio from Alsace." His friends, Manet and Degas, tried very hard to make him paint more seriously. Indeed, under their influence, he painted a picture that these artists considered a masterpiece, but it was severely attacked by the influential critics. In a rage Henner destroyed the work, promising himself never again to heed his revolutionary friends.

Bouguereau was tempted by the honors and the riches that official France bestowed upon her darlings, never by profound aesthetic considerations. Undoubtedly, he knew that at the art exhibition in 1855 all the juicy prizes went to the followers of old Monsieur Ingres, the tyrannical czar of the Academie, protagonist of linearism, to whom the color orgies of Delacroix and the harsh realism of that younger man, Courbet, were equally unacceptable. And Bouguereau also knew that the nouveau-riche who paid for pictures, would not buy them unless they were done in the style of the Academie, and would "go" with the Louis Quinze and Seize furniture and tapestries that were jammed into the new middle-class palaces. And unless they were surrounded by elaborate "antique" gold frames, eight to ten inches wide, richly carved, with pompous scroll work and floral ornament.

Courbet had expressed the wish to make living art ("faire de l'art vivant"), and Daumier had shouted: "One has to be of one's own time!" ("Il faut être de son temps.") But Courbet's idealism got him into serious political trouble and even into jail, while Daumier would have starved to death without Corot's magnificent help.

Bouguereau knew all this—and acted knowingly. He had studied under a pupil of Ingres, and he was aware that, whatever nasty names the young revolutionaries might give to this imperishable octogenarian, Ingres was still the monarch. "Learn to draw until you can draw stupidly," and "Anything that is well drawn is well enough painted," the old man said—and Bouguereau used his brush as if it were a

pencil, filling in the spaces with hard, thin color, as if he were painting on porcelain.

And Bouguereau also knew that there was no longer much demand for the big historical pictures he had painted as a youth. And that there was great demand for morally acceptable nudes, made socially presentable through mythological disguise. Whatever one did, one must not ignore the rules of the game. Cabanel's *Birth of Venus*—the naked Goddess lying on the crest of a wave, surrounded by bare-bottomed little Cupids—was purchased by Napoleon III and brought its artist a promotion in the Legion of Honor and election to the Institute. But when the Imperial Couple, in an exhibition, encountered Manet's *Luncheon in the Grass*—two conventionally dressed nineteenth-century Frenchmen lolling about in the company of two undressed girls—they left in a huff of indignation.

It appears odd that, of all people, Bouguereau was destined to become a mass producer of what Henry James called the "conscientious nude." He did not participate in the bohemian life, so vividly described by his contemporary, Murger. His first marriage was ended by his wife's early death. Thereupon his mother took over, keeping house for the widower and for his two children. The children presently left to live their own lives, but the old lady stayed on, seeing to it that her "boy" lived a "regular" life, a life bounded by work and lightened by no play. Somehow an Elizabeth Gardner, a New England miss with cropped hair who slipped into the Académie Julian disguised as a man—no female students were admitted as yet—managed to break the ice and conquer what seemed to be a hopeless bachelor. There was still no wedding, because the mother objected to her son's marrying an American. The stern old tyrannical lady lived to be ninety-one, and not until 1896, after her death, could the bridegroom, aged seventy-one, and the bride, aged fifty-six, walk to the altar.

Bouguereau's nudes offer an interesting comparison with those of Renoir. Though a family man and a solid citizen in the best French tradition, Renoir was no prig—he was a healthy pagan who adored women; even when he was close to eighty, and a crippled invalid, he still expressed that joie de vivre that made his pictures so very much alive: "Paint with joy," he said to the young Modigliani, "with the same joy you would make love to a woman." And he added: "I always caress the buttocks for days and days before finishing a canvas."

Renoir's nudes are enticing and delightful, but never lewd. Professor Bouguereau, however, who had been educated by a priest (his paternal uncle), and who was a churchgoer, gave all his pictures a tincture of lewdness. Under his brush, the garments of even a fully clothed woman became slightly disarrayed; part of the dress would slip from one shoulder, cleverly exposing a breast. As for his nudes, there is always something slyly indecent in their movements or in the expression on their faces—his ladies, whether pursued by Cupids or by fauns, "protest," but not very convincingly. All the allusions to Greek mythology cannot conceal the fact that these women are no goddesses but high-class whores, though few such perfectly proportioned bodies were likely to be found in the "closed houses" of nineteenth-century Paris. Bouguereaus were ideal for "study purposes" between visits to these houses, and bankers, industrialists, politicians, hung them in their drawing rooms, to be discussed "scientifically" by the host and his male guests in their buttoned-up frock coats after the ladies had withdrawn for a conversation of their own.

He imparted this "Who—me?" look even to the peasant girls of his native La Rochelle. Whether they are sitting demurely on benches, gathering mushrooms in the woods, carrying a small baby brother across a shallow brook, or carefully balancing upon their well-groomed heads baskets of bright fresh linen—they are far from innocent! They are Parisian actresses, playing ingénus. Their dresses are immaculate, their fingers delicately tapering, their bare feet perfect—the mud of the fields, the dust of the roadside left no trace on clothing or body. Compare them to the earthy peasants of Pissarro, or the tired lavandreuses of Degas!

Like many of his contemporaries, Bouguereau was torn between honesty and hypocrisy. In one moment of sober truthfulness he confessed why he had abandoned the more ambitious work of his youth: "I soon found that the horrible, the frenzied, the heroic does not pay; and as the public of today prefers Venuses and Cupids, and as I paint to please the public, to Venus and Cupid I chiefly devote myself." One is reminded here of the cynical advice of another nineteenth-century artist, Sir David Wilkie, the originator of British genre painting, that "to know the taste of the public, to learn what will best please the employer, is to the artist the most valuable of knowledge." At the same time, in an attack made on the Impressionists, Symbolists,

Pointillists, and other schools of his time, Bouguereau declared, as if he were, not the maître de plaisir of the rich, but a soul-searching prophet: "There is only the art of the representation of nature by an artist whose sole aim is to express its truth. . . . I accept and respect all schools of painting which have as their basis the sincere study of nature, the search for the true and the beautiful."

The free artist who painted as he pleased, with no master but his own conscience, searching for "the true and the beautiful" did exist, but his name was Van Gogh, not Bouguereau, and his pictures were completely unsaleable. It is ironic that this very Bouguereau who scorned his father's career as a businessman, ended up as a manufacturer of pictures. Having early developed a formula, he followed it to the end. For fifty years, his workday began at six in the morning and ended at ten at night. And by the time he was thirty, he had learned to turn out his work in quantity without any greater regard for quality than a manufacturer shows in keeping up the standard of his wares. There is no outstanding chef d'oeuvre, no heights, but also no decline. It was this steadiness, above all other things, that made him so very fashionable and wealthy. Bouguereau could be counted on for the sort of work patrons of art expected and had already learned to enjoy. He had no surprises in store to shock their sensibilities and to impose on them the labor of learning new principles and new formulas.

Bouguereau filled their order. For his creations are as perfect as an expensive brand of perfume or toilet soap. But his academic correctness failed to hide from the cognoscenti the underlying pettiness and poverty of spirit. His nudes, without a wrinkle of the skin, without any breathing of the flesh, without any inner structure or organs, are too pink, too soft, too spineless—too slick to command our admiration. In a superficial way, they are marvelously correct, but as one of his colleagues, Steinlen, wisely remarked: "When everything is perfect, nothing is perfect."

He even had the audacity to make religious pictures. True, he was a good Catholic, but that was not enough. His Madonnas have no more soul than his nymphs. Yes, the outlines are graceful, the surfaces smooth, and the colors sweet—yet something is lacking—the mystery that is in every great painting. Bouguereau's pictures talk too much, and say too little, they are frank where they should be reserved, shallow

where they should be deep. In him, the "grand manner" of an Ingres had ended up as a farce.

By the time that his fame and importance had been somewhat cropped by the much delayed, but inevitable victory of the Impressionists in Europe, he was still going strong in this country. In 1890 he even had here what would contribute more than anything else to a success—a little scandal, caused by a painting, *The Return of Spring*. It had been purchased for $20,000, a sum an American artist might have envied. It was a typical Bouguereau: a naked maiden, in her adolescence, shivering in the fresh winds, and surrounded by hovering little Cupids. When shown at Omaha, the picture was mutilated by what the papers indignantly termed "a purient not to say obscene-minded crank." The action was, of course, both stupid and psychotic, but the editorial writer who wondered how this work could arouse "offensive ideas" except in "a mind of basest lewdness" was wrong, and the poor prig who attacked the picture, "right": Bouguereau's art reached the height of Victorian sexual hypocrisy, and it would be extremely hard to find anything matching him in concealed lecherousness until we reach the "masturbation pieces" by another professor, namely, Adolf Ziegler, Hitler's trusted mass producer of immaculately Aryan blonde nudes.

Bouguereaus found their way into the most celebrated collections, including those of Henry Clay Frick and Chester Dale. But the most colorful owner of a Bouguereau was Edward S. Stokes, one of the big nineteenth-century bosses—and thereby hangs a tale.

In 1872, handsome Ned Stokes, politician and entrepreneur, killed Jim Fisk, partner of Jay Gould, friend of Boss Tweed, and the principal villain of the Black Friday panic of 1869, over a beautiful "actress" named Josie Mansfield. After four years in Sing Sing, he bought an interest in the Hoffman House, at 24th and Broadway, New York, promising to make it "the finest damn hotel in America." For its barroom, he bought a Bouguereau for $10,000. For many years market manipulators and Democratic Party bosses were to stare, in semi-intoxication, at this *Nymphs and Satyr*. Barnum, Maurice Barrymore, James Gordon Bennett, and Buffalo Bill regarded it admiringly. But after Stokes' death in 1901 it disappeared, and was not rediscovered until more than forty years later. It was only then that an employee of the firm of Durand-Ruel, going to the Manhattan warehouse to check on

the condition of some Degas and Renoir pictures, accidentally stumbled upon the piece. Forgotten, unrecorded, he purchased it on the spot, and immediately resold it to an unnamed collector. *Nymphs and Satyr* even made political history: exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery for the benefit of the Free French Relief Committee, it brought several thousand dollars within three weeks, in quarter admissions.

In addition, it aroused speculations in the art world which have not ebbed. In fact, there have been shouts of "Back to Bouguereau" at least once every decade since the artist's death. Back in 1932, under this title, a New York gallery opened a big show. Oddly, the catalogue foreword was written, not by one of the many grey-haired and reactionary National Academy luminaries who might be expected to use him to attack Matisse and Picasso, but by a great modernist, the Mexican Jean Charlot:

> Much has been said of Bouguereau's technical perfection. And indeed his craft is astonishingly sound and will appear more so as time elapses. His work, severely opposed to the creeds in fashion, appeals for that very reason to the younger generation of artists, tired of the too individual and often obscure language of the masters of modern art. Tired too of the strange distrust of nature as it is that characterizes the best of our living artists, Bouguereau's splendid impersonality, his faith in description and even in story-telling, appeal to them as much as does his personal elocution. Wise and cool, Bouguereau's work may have a soothing effect and remind one that men of great talent need not behave like madmen.

Whatever the reactions of the visitors, the critics were not swayed. They all agreed that his work was technically beyond reproach, and even conceded that here and there one could find passages of genuine charm and pictorial feeling. But they also agreed that, on the whole, they could not stomach his "too marvelous and perfect ladies and angelic children" and that, with few exceptions, his works were "cloying and soft to the point of stupidity."

The pendulum did not swing back, as the gallery owners had hoped it would, and art and artists moved forward to new horizons. In 1943 the rediscovery of *Nymphs and Satyr* revived the controversy, and again the critics rushed to attack, calling the huge canvas "one grandiose banality which really sums up in one vast anthology the countless banalities of the whole epoch." In the 1950's, Bouguereau came to mind when the remodeled Metropolitan Museum dug out of

its cellars and displayed prominently on its walls two typical samples of the overfinished "academic" art, Rosa Bonheur's huge panoramic *Horse Fair* and Regnault's *Salome*. Why not also Bouguereau? But the one work which the Metropolitan owns, *Two Sisters*, had been loaned to another institution.

The other day I looked into the shop of a 57th Street dealer who specializes in romantic, story-telling and sexy pictures. Here I received a jolt upon re-examining the Bouguereaus in the shop and noting, to my chagrin, that they were not so bad after all. Though the subject matter was distasteful, I was struck by the thin, enamel-smooth precision, by flesh tones having a pearly quality challenging Renoir. What made me so sure that I would, under no circumstances, like a Bouguereau as much as I liked a Renoir?

But after leaving the sultry show room, I quickly recovered myself in the open air. No, Bouguereau will not be able to convince me that what he gives us is art—no more than a burlesque show will convince me that it is legitimate theatre. Today, with so many painters approaching their canvases with more force and self-confidence than solid preparatory training, there is a great danger of overvaluing the craftsmanship of an old-time academician, even if it is devoid of life. One can sympathize with a Bouguereau when, in a speech opposing the relaxation of the rigid rules binding the Beaux Arts school, he raised the question: "Is there any anguish like that of the artist who feels the realization of his dreams compromised by the impotence of his execution?" But, unfortunately, Bouguereau himself did not permit himself to "dream": in his work, there is no room for spontaneity of the "accident" (which means so much to a certain group of Modernists), for adventure. "Every detail of a work must be thought out beforehand, down to the last particular," he said. The stage is always perfectly set for the Tableau Vivant. A trip to Tahiti would not have made the slightest difference in his outlook or his style. He hated that *plein-air* painting that had been introduced by the Impressionists, for it forced the artist to cope with the whims of Nature, to yield to the irrational. Hence, Bouguereau always worked in the studio—we would know this even if we had not been told so, from the top lighting and from the coloring which is that of indoors.

Just as Nature did not exist for him except as a backdrop for a picture, so it never occurred to him to exploit the sensuous properties

of oil paint. He was a perfectionist who sought a physical norm so devoid of all blemish, of all deviation from his preconceived "ideal" that he divested it of humanity. This was his formula—and eventually all that was left to him—his "trick." But you cannot abstract emotion from life and still create living art. Bouguereau was a "living corpse." Despite his two marriages, and his two children (of whom we know very little) and despite his many activities in the artistic life of his country, he lived the life of a hermit, did not allow any controversy to disrupt the artificial serenity of his existence. He left no letters, no memoirs, no reports of scandals.

He lived up to and beyond the edge of his vogue. By the time of his death even in America his glory was dimming. Reporting on his passing, the New York *Times* said, on August 21, 1905:

"His pictures just suited the American public of a couple of years ago—that public whose philistinism provoked the bitter scorn of Matthew Arnold and others. Nowadays the American collector knows better, but at one time to possess a Bouguereau was regarded as the first necessity for an art patron."

The most fitting epitaph, however, would have been the verdict of a colleague whom he had asked for a frank opinion:

"Of all the men who paint Bouguereaus, you paint them best."

The Map Room

By Robert Greenwood

Row upon row, on the polished oak wall
They hang, some large and old, others small,
Not yet discolored—abstractions of line
And scale. See this one, observe here the sign,
How at the distant border, half-concealed,
The fictitious monster rears.

In the field,
And exploration we ink our own remarks,
By color and shape fix further landmarks.
These are perhaps the best of all discerned
Where the scale is full and direction earned.

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Books - - - -

SOME RECENT FICTION

The Deer Park. By Norman Mailer. Putnam, 1955. $4.

The Spider's House. By Paul Bowles. Random House, 1955. $3.95.

Partisans. By Peter Matthiessen. Viking, 1955. $3.

The Loved and the Unloved. By Thomas Hal Phillips. Harper, 1955. $3.

Some of the best fiction of recent years has been by new writers: *Out Went the Candle* by Harvey Swados, *Lie Down in Darkness* by William Stryon and *A Good Man* by Jefferson Young, to name a few. The first novel of genuine promise is always exciting, for in welcoming the new voice there is some anticipation that we may hear it again, hopeful that we may have a growing body of work which will give substance to a literary personality, to a cogent literary generation. We shall have more books to place on the shelf along with those of James Jones, Saul Bellow, of Norman Mailer and Paul Bowles.

My interest in all of the writers whose novels are reviewed here has not dimmed. Yet I must confess that Mr. Mailer's *The Deer Park* is a disappointment equal to that of *Barbary Shore*, his second novel, and Mr. Bowles' *The Spider's House* is by comparison with the unforgettable *The Sheltering Sky* and the highly original short stories of *The Delicate Prey* blurred and indecisive.

I cannot in this review explore the apparent dilemma of the writer who, having achieved applause with a first novel, is expected to repeat his performance. Only the rare novelist, such as E. M. Forster, to name one, produces novel after novel, all interesting, all regarded as deserving of equal attention, if not of equal merit. Hemingway, Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, three of our major novelists in this century, are as interesting to read at their second-best as at their best. Prolix and muddy as Faulkner may be, he always deserves attention, if oftentimes excessive patience. Hemingway when he writes badly—Hemingway imitating Hemingway, as some critics put it—is never dull. And there is no novel of Fitzgerald's, whatever its surface slickness, which raises any serious doubt about his unrelenting struggle for literary integrity.

I will ignore the notoriety *The Deer Park* earned before it was published. The story is well known that Mr. Mailer weeded out excessive obscenity in order, finally, to find a publisher. I am satisfied that Mr.

Mailer presumed to write a serious novel in a serious vein about Hollywood's monkey-house of producers, writers and actors. If I read him right—and I admit I had difficulty in extracting Mr. Mailer's theme: it may, indeed, be not in the book but in my own mind—his subject is the important one of the sensitive literary artist, Charles Francis Eitel, who is forced for the sake of money to prostitute his work, who for the sake of keeping a job must lie to an investigating committee about his leftist associations. Such a man hopes to retain his capacity for love. He cannot. Love, also, is not a value and becomes simply the scrotal itch, the phallic thrust, lover and loved one degraded.

The story is told by young Sergius O'Shaugnessy, an ex-Air Force lieutenant who with $14,000 of poker winnings sets himself down at Desert D'Or, a Hollywood desert playground; his is the fantastic notion that such a place provides a setting where he can write his first novel. It does. *The Deer Park* is the novel. Sergius himself, Lulu Meyers, a super-glamorous baggage of tinsel—needless to say a major movie star—Eitel and his dreary Elena who is the cast-off mistress of Collie Munshin, a powerful producer's son-in-law, and various—or should I say, unvaried — other nymphomaniacs, satyrs, degenerates and pimps are the Mailer-O'Shaugnessy menageries of lust-loving rather than lusty characters. It is, at the outset, difficult to accept *The Deer Park* as Sergius' novel; as a narrator he fades out and Mailer, ostensibly, takes over—and we cannot be too sure if the imitations of Hemingway, John O'Hara, to say nothing of Sinclair Lewis—at his worst—are those by Mailer or Sergius. The credibility of anything like a consistent fictive experience becomes agonizingly frayed, a mishap fatal to the reader's sustained belief far more serious than the excessive use of bedroom athletics which swallow entirely the presumed theme, which, as I have said, is of some consequence.

If writing is hard work, it soon becomes clear that it is Mailer's work, not Sergius', which obtrudes—an effort achieving only the effect of splendid apathy. We cannot mistake Mailer's concern with these itchy, self-defeated, self-pitying characters as equal to that of his invented novelist's. All are similarly noteworthy for their lack of response. Mailer's response is simply that of contempt, unrelieved by the grace of tragic despair. There is no rising acting here; nothing evolves; nothing finally culminates but the defeat of the defeated. Sexual activity, if it ever had anything to do with the pursuit of pleasure—even at second hand—is similarly and unrewarding hard, hard work.

At one point Sergius, the novice writer, states he has little story to tell. This is true, as it is true that Mr. Mailer failed to invent one for him.

Just about half of Mr. Bowles' *The Spider's House* is of intense interest, of great charm, if such a word may be used to describe the character of such a boy as Amar of Fez against the background of the present struggle in French North Africa. It is Amar who, the devout Moslem, prays that Allah might help his people "discover new refinements in the matter of causing pain and despair, might show them the way to the imposing of hitherto undreamed-of humiliation, degradation and agony" on their rulers.

In this novel we have a successful dramatization, close-up, of the struggle too unapparent as reported in our newspapers; we understand emotionally—which is the understanding the best fiction can give us—of the old, old error still ignored that might does not make right. Amar knew that his attempt to fathom the mystery of his rulers "was an endless task, because the further one advanced into their world, the more conscious one became it was necessary to change oneself fundamentally in order to know them . . . one had to be able to think as they thought, to feel as they felt. . . ." He considered the first step the establishment of an awareness of people. When he told his friend Moss this, Moss laughed, saying he was "morally still a totalitarian."

Amar's luck is not good. His first acquaintance with any foreigner is not with a Frenchman but with an introverted American writer, John Stenham, who, idling in Fez in a luxury hotel "has experienced the future and has been able to reject it"—that "future" being Communism. Amar tells him that "The French are thieves in our house. . . . We invited them in because we wanted to take lessons from them. We thought they'd teach us. They haven't taught us anything—not even how to be good thieves." All John Stenham can ask is if Amar can't choose to hate or not to hate. "The day Allah wants me to stop hating them," Amar replies, "he'll change my heart." It won't be an easy world to live in if Amar thinks that, but Amar can only answer, "It will never be easy in the world. . . . God doesn't want it easy."

John Stenham may not want it easy. As a writer, he can only observe passively. Effective as he may be as a writer, however, as a character he is undynamic: the narrative seems to hug the still point in those chapters devoted to him and his tourist friends. At the book's end, he runs away from the fighting with a new mistress, Lee Veyon, an American divorcee "who is not even conscious of the direction in which she is moving."

As I have said, the novel is blurred and indecisive. Perhaps I am only complaining that Mr. Bowles chose such characters—actually stereotypes of their special calibre—to represent the non-Moslem world. Could they possibly be *too* representative? Even

so, they flaw the documentary realism of the book; valuable insights become marred by their hovering reappearance at moments when the native scene, the native characters, absorb our attention. Actually, these Americans are stock characters whom we have met in Mr. Bowles's previous novels. *The Spider's House* has hero and anti-hero, perhaps because Mr. Bowles may be primarily concerned with an effect of startling black and white, of sunshine and shadow — the background of the North African tragedy. But we wish to know such characters as Amar better. Mr. Bowles, with his powerful talent, with a top-notch descriptive talent, owes us a better balance. Stenham should have been scaled as the minor character which he actually is.

Peter Matthiessen, whose first novel, *Race Rock*, was warmly received, in *Partisans* shows more sure signs of being a novelist who has as much interest in fictive techniques as in successfully created characters who have a vitality far in excess of their symbolic values. That is, they are real as people, only incidentally valuable as symbols. The hero here is a journalist, Barney Sand, living in Paris, who "at twenty-nine, was idealistic still, but increasingly conscious of losing ground. Over the years he had grown less angry at injustice, more ready to accept what his editor . . . had termed 'the facts of life.'" Barney's father is a loyal, overly-diplomatic American diplomat, disturbed by Barney's fascination, since an encounter in boyhood, with Jacobi, a Communist leader—Barney's first concept of a "heroic man," a man not then a political hero and leader. Jacobi, when found, refuses to become any kind of journalistic fodder for Barney: he will not be a "story." He is able, however, to impart to him the significance of what it can mean to be a true "partisan," to cling to a belief—rather, to a belief in belief—however betrayed a man may become because a relationship to Party ideology cannot be supported by personal passion.

Much of my admiration of this novel lies in Mr. Matthiessen's skill as a craftsman. On one level, what we have here is the usual story of intrigue, the "chase novel" which is a pattern as old as story-telling itself. There is suspense: we care about reading as an active following through to the climax which lies in wait. We are not disappointed. Further, there is a human concern for Barney himself. He is naive — "American," as Europeans would put it—in open-eyed wonder at the underworld night-life of Paris and a "political romantic."

Nowhere cluttering the story are the tell-tale symbolic meanings of such incidents as Barney's unpleasant reaction to his rescuing of a spastic boy from near-drowning or the significance of a falcon's swoop over the Seine to kill a pigeon. They are there for a thematic purpose; they are not there as the only purpose of a writer concerned with sym-

bolic incidents to the disadvantage of story or plot. Barney's motivations in his somewhat mystical search for Jacobi may seem weak, but his climactic confusion that, over the years, as "a student, a soldier, a student once again, and now in the third of three lackluster jobs, his rough edges had been rounded off, his vision scuffed and scarred" and he may grow calloused and indifferent is significant. Recognizing his frailty, conscious of his state, Barney might well be any one of us.

Finally, in my opinion, Thomas Hal Phillips, a Mississippi writer, with his fourth novel has achieved an almost flawless work. At least *The Loved and the Unloved* exercised on me a powerful kind of belief, one that finally ignores the problem of the first-person narration, after an introductory chapter which seems merely theatrical. The story is told—written, as we learn in this first chapter—by Max Harper in the last days before his execution for murder. He is a sharecropper, born with a club foot, straightened at an insurance company's expense. After service as an infantryman in World War II, he returns to find his home burned down, his girl married, and his much-admired tenant's son now the overseer of the farm. The overbearing, much hated and spoiled son threatens to reveal the fraud by which Max has been able to afford the operation on his foot and Max Harper then kills him.

It is Mr. Phillips' wisdom, as well as his skill as a writer of dramatic narrative, which we come to admire. His story is not so much burdened as somehow illuminated by his understanding of human misery, of poverty, of slowly corroding hatred, of unreasonable injustice. All his characters may be types, but no more so than all humans are types—"Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief; doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief: each must drink so much sorrow, one from a gourd, another from a china teacup." Life is like . . . "a horn, tiny at one end and infinite at the other. A great deal depends on what end of the horn you enter. Not so much what's in the horn." Life is also made up of "so many things that hurt our hearts and mend them and hurt them over again, and maybe the thing to remember is: where time is there will be somebody to lift a hand on the way to a garden, or somebody to sit across the checkerboard, and somebody ready to die because somebody else is not brave. . . . And the small shall be large and the large shall be small. The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

Mr. Phillips' novel does not try to do much, but I want to recommend it for simply that reason—that the people in it, though small, are a larger part of humanity. What I have quoted above may seem little more than homilies; the point is that in the context of this short novel, at the moment that we are living with its characters, we accept what

these characters say. In this can be recognized a true experience of a work of fiction, whatever the range of its purpose may be.

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WESTERN PATTERNS ON AN AFRICAN BASE

The Gold Coast in Transition. By David E. Apter. Princeton University Press, 1955. $5.

It would be hard to overestimate the significance of such studies as Dr. Apter's; for the shape of an uncertain future will be determined in large measure by the way in which so-called underdeveloped areas assimilate and modify those western patterns of social organization which press inexorably upon the vast populations of Africa and Asia.

Apter sets himself two tasks in this book. First, he reports on the transfer of political institutions from Britain to the Gold Coast. Second, he tries to test the usefulness of a certain conceptual framework in the analysis of a case of rapid social change.

The second objective overrides the first. This is undoubtedly legitimate. Indeed it is necessary if the writer is to develop a system of comparative analysis. (He is now in Uganda where his studies can profit from the benchmark established in the Gold Coast study.) Yet there are corollary shortcomings. It means, of course, that the inquiry is restricted, passing lightly over specific religious, educational and economic changes. In addition, the study moves at a level of abstraction which places it in the strongest contrast to, say, the highly literate report on developments in South Africa by Leo Marquard. A related difficulty lies in the polymorphous vocabulary of concepts deriving from sociological theory. This is likely to induce a state of linguistic shock in the nonprofessional reader. The social scientist, on the other hand, will find a useful but selective application of theoretical concepts within an implicit framework of functional analysis.

These can be conceived of as shortcomings principally with respect to the first objective. Actually, the contribution of this work must lie in the extent to which it provides the conceptual pegs on which comparative data from other areas-in-transition can be hung.

At the outset the problem is stated and obstacles to government in British West Africa are outlined: lack of social and historical unity and of trained personnel, the presence of poverty, disease and apathy on the one hand and opportunism on the other, and the dysfunctional pattern of tribal organization. Apter defines his concepts, sketches in the chief Gold Coast areas (the Colony, the Ashanti and the Northern Terri-

tories) and discusses the bases of emerging political organization: the tribal system, the Marxist model and the British parliamentary pattern. This is followed by an historical sketch and a discussion of the physical and economic setting of the Gold Coast. The heart of the book starts with a discussion of the traditionally oriented system based upon kinship or lineage. In this pattern of organization he identifies what Robert MacIver has called "the seedbed of government." Out of this system of control based largely upon blood ties emerged the tribal system of political organization represented, in a highly developed state, in the Ashanti Confederacy.

Under the scheme of indirect rule, the British attempted to blend the old and the new, the traditional and the secular. But this attempt gave rise to the dilemma described by Rattray in his study, *Ashanti Law*.

> In introducing indirect rule into this country, we would therefore appear to be encouraging on the one hand an institution which draws its inspiration and validity from the indigenous religious beliefs, while on the other we are systematically destroying the very foundations upon which the structure that we are striving to perpetuate stands. Its shell and outward form might remain, but it would seem too much to expect that its vital energy could survive such a process.

In more general terms Apter's study suggests that any leadership role in an integrated social system must be derogated when it is incorporated in the control pattern of an external social system. And the derogation of traditional leadership implies, of course, a chain reaction affecting all interdependent elements of the system.

Under the system of indirect rule the effectiveness of tribal leadership was reduced in two ways: by the residual character of tribal duties; and by identification of the chief as lackey of the British.

The perception of the chief as a mouthpiece for the imperialist power promoted what is called "the self-fulfilling prophecy." Lack of confidence in the tribal leader led him to rely increasingly upon the district commissioner's support of his decisions. Thus the suspicion of a treacherous collaboration with the British led to a tighter bond between tribal leader and British administrator, confirming the original suspicion.

So it was that the attempt to enhance the efficiency of British control and to support traditional ways through indirect rule resulted in undermining the traditional pattern. The requirements of colonial administration—of secular, parliamentary government in a traditional order—prompted the use of traditional leaders to subvert tradition more expeditiously! The chiefs in their roles as subordinate advisers became indispensable and skilled appendages to the administration; while their traditional roles as tribal leaders

became peripheral.

Leadership is one inevitable focus of attention in a study of the transfer of political institutions. In ordering his observations Apter develops a threefold typology of leadership, following the German sociologist Max Weber. There is the rational leader, characteristic of the bureaucratic organization. In the Gold Coast situation these people are the British-trained, western-acting, effectively detribalized leaders. Some are impatient and aggressive. Others with considerable insight, clearly understanding the delicate problem of transfer of power, support a gradualist policy which would preclude errors entailing loss of face, of power, of solvency.

On the other hand, there are the traditional leaders who have regarded themselves as the legitimate heirs of British authority. In the contrast between these two types of leaders we see a time dimension which informs and affects the character of leadership. Authority resides in and is legitimated from the past. Leadership incorporates authority—and therefore the past. The source of the good lies in the past. Furthermore, the past has the functional ambiguity of an inkblot or good poetry; it permits, within a given range, diverse interpretations. Thus while there may be considerable precision in ritual affairs, decision-making is closely related to the ability and idiosyncratic characteristics of the leader whose effectiveness resides in that particular conjunction of attributes which legitimate his position. That is to say, in Talcott Parson's terms, the traditional leader's role may be described as particularistic in its criteria and diffuse in its functions. Recruitment for the role depends upon a particular congeries of attributes among which lineage is of primary importance. But his performance tends to be only loosely described and prescribed.

On the other hand the contemporary administrator's role may be described as depending upon universalistic attributes and very specific patterns of performance. The official is selected in terms of general traits, independent of blood line, which qualify him to handle specified tasks in clearly and often minutely specified fashion. The new leadership is present- and future-oriented. Thus contemporary Gold Coast leadership almost necessarily means a stress between two time-orientations and two sources of authority: the sacred and the traditional on the one hand; the secular and the contemporary on the other. The one springs from his nonliterate and impotent fellow tribesmen whose "deficiencies" he's been trained to derogate; the other from the literate and powerful white Britisher whose efficiency he has learned to admire while simultaneously resenting his own comparative unimportance which is its consequence.

In any situation of social change,

tension is inevitable. There is the tension between the advantage of the past and the profit of the future. Obviously the future will appeal to the dispossessed; the past to the presently fortunate.

But the aspirations of the future-oriented strivers are almost sure to be frustrated. For as M. Jourdain discovered, the trappings of high status constitute a veneer obscuring its responsibilities. Any significant pattern of human relationships carries an implicit rationale and mandatory norms of conduct. But these are subtly given and arduously learned. They underlie almost surreptitiously the obvious externalities of conduct. It is easy to observe the delights of wealth which one wishes to acquire. It is not so obvious that there are ethical preconditions—". . . before Virtue the immortal gods have put the sweat of man's brow." It is easy for the governed to observe the power wielded by the governors. It is not so apparent that this authority is coupled with a value system which, e.g., opposes nepotism and corruption, invoking a pattern of disciplined effort and a keen awareness of the ambivalent nature of mortal decisions.

The Nationalist's dilemma is, of course, compounded by his rejection of the tribal past. Not only may he have an ingenuous conception of authority roles. He may fall into a naive depreciation of tribal traditions. His is a Tantalus role without the full savor of the grapes of power or the clear water of tribal status to slake his thirst for personal dignity. This was particularly the case under indirect rule which, as Apter says,

> . . . evoked a range of demands which were impossible to fulfill. No . . . government of an underdeveloped area can move very rapidly towards fulfilling the goals it has inspired. Particularly for the educated and for the youth, impatience and hostility were turned against both the traditional leadership and the colonial officers, leaving people embroiled in confusion, while underneath, like an ugly current, was the self-consciousness of race.

Perhaps under these conditions, as the writer implies, successful transfer of political institutions could not occur without the emergence of a third type of leadership, the man with *charisma*. Nkrumah was the man with the supernaturally given gift of grace. In the final chapters of the book Nkrumah emerges as the catalytic agent reconciling, insofar as it is at all accomplished, the old and the new, the sacred and the secular, the traditional and the modern. Social scientists will hope that Apter's subsequent studies may throw more light on the possibly indispensable role of the charismatic leader in successful Nationalistic movements.

This is not, of course, to imply that with the charismatic leader all problems of institutional transfer are neatly resolved. Certainly Nkrumah has encountered all manner of

obstacles and resistance. Not to expect this would be infinitely ingenuous. Various members of any social system enjoy, in differing degree, power, privilege, prestige. Any anticipated change must mean—except perhaps for the utterly dispossessed—the probability either of lowered or elevated status.

For the tribal chiefs whose status in the traditional system was high, the most likely change was downward. Under the policy of indirect rule sponsored by the British they were, as we have noted, vulnerable to the charge that they were puppets. Yet the façade of power was theirs; and there was the likelihood that under a gradualist policy they would presently come into their own. The chiefs, Apter states, ". . . apparently envisioned their position as conservative-nationalist and their increasing responsibility (as) 'orderly progress.'" The intrusion of western educated, anti-traditional leaders could only be conceived as a threat to their future leadership roles.

The resistance in the Northern Territories was compounded of a number of factors: ethnic differences, the suspicions and categorical stereotypes which may more easily be generated at a distance, the grudging dependence of the hinterlands upon the urban, commercial centers, and the anticipation of being subordinated by one's peers or inferiors. Thus the do-nothing, heel-dragging reluctance of Northern Territories people, who under nationalism would find themselves an impotent minority. Worse still, they would be dominated not by a powerful alien group (for which there might be understandable reason); but by their peers or inferiors, for which there could be no legitimate excuse. To anticipate political subjection by those regarded as no higher than one's self is to savor humiliation. An *illegitimate* subordination may in this sense be tolerable; while a legitimate or p[illegible]mentary subordination becomes unbearable.

Here there is an intimation of that recurrent phenomenon, the antithesis between two ways of life associated, respectively, with the remote and isolated hunting-agrarian mode and with the commercial-industrial-urban mode. The resistance to centralized controls typically emanating from rural centers is, I think, clearly conveyed by these simple but penetrating admonitions which are repeated to the chief, among certain of the Ashantis, at the moment of enstoolment (enthronement).

Tell him [the chief] that:

We do not wish greediness
We do not wish that he should curse us
We do not wish that his ears should be hard of hearing
We do not wish that he should call us fools
We do not wish that he should act on his own initiative
We do not wish things done as in Kumasi
We do not wish that it should ever be said 'I have no time,

'I have no time.'
We do not wish personal abuse
We do not wish personal violence

The italics are mine. Kumasi is the capital of the central part of the Gold Coast, the Ashanti Confederacy. It had, in 1948, a population of about 78,000. "We do not wish things done as in Kumasi," is the cry of upstate New York against "the City," of downstate Illinois against Chicago, of the wary tight-lipped rustic around the world against the illicit machinations of an anonymous "they" whose controls and directives flow from the urban centers. Liberation from the soil and alienation from the traditional past promote the development of urban centers. The increasingly diverse activities of these nuclei exert pressure for more intricate and rational systems of control and coordination. The inevitable outcome seems to be antagonistic tug and tussle in adapting to the exigencies of change. This is certainly one significant aspect of the problem suggested by Apter's study of the transfer of political institutions.

Within the limits of a short review one can scarcely enumerate, much less pursue the ideas generated in this study. But one more point should be made. We must recognize, as the author does, that the transition in the Gold Coast represents more than a theoretical problem for the social scientist. It is also a problem, a challenge and perhaps a program for democracy. (The author, as a matter of fact, does present one important proposal aimed at elevating the now depressed status of tribal leaders and facilitating institutional transfer.)

"The language of Marxism and the language of nationalism often sound alike," Apter notes. However superficial the similarity of sound, Western democracies must supply more than self-righteous protestations to spare the underdeveloped countries the new colonialism of Communism. They will have to provide a model for the transfer of political institutions—a model which meets legitimate demands for self-determination without jeopardizing the success of the new state through ignorance and opportunism. Disregarding the ambiguous matter of motives, it's probably fair to say that the British have attempted more than any other of the democracies to provide such a model. But one further step remains. The adequacy of the model must be assessed. This is the important task which Apter has undertaken.

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GERMANS UNDER THE SOVIETS

The Explosion: the Uprising Behind the Iron Curtain. By Rainer Hildebrandt. Translated by E. B. Ashton. Introduction by Norbert Muhlen. Duell, Sloan and Pearce; Little Brown, 1955. $3.75.

An unprecedented event took place during the early summer of 1953: for the first time large-scale open resistance broke out against an Iron Curtain government. First the people of East Berlin and then those of the whole German Democratic Republic rose in protest against their Communist rulers. The light of revolt burned for only two days before it was extinguished. The West was completely taken by surprise. Journalistic accounts appeared widely in the aftermath of the event, but it seems to have been soon forgotten. There is still no adequate study of the episode or any systematic attempt to consider its implications.

Rainer Hildebrandt, a West German who has had much to do with the opposition movement in East Germany, has written a gripping account of the June days which provides some of the raw material for such a study. His book is history-cum-journalism at its very best. In the John Hersey manner he fashions his narrative around the experiences of nine persons who went through those days. Although he is said to have interviewed some three hundred witnesses in collecting his material, his story moves swiftly and with all the suspense of a Graham Greene divertissement.

It all began with the opposition of the construction workers in East Berlin's show-place, Stalin-Allee, to an increase in their work norms decreed by the government. Hildebrandt draws on the recollections of a participant and describes through his eyes the protest march to the government building. It was there that the economic demands began to turn into political opposition to the government. In some of the most interesting pages of the book, Hildebrandt describes the dramatic scene in front of the ministry building through the eyes of Ella Saare, a leader of the Communist Free German Youth, who joined the demonstrators and hurled her Youth sweater into the crowd. Placed in a situation where there was no Party prescription for action, she responded spontaneously to a sense of solidarity with the workers.

Meanwhile the whole eastern zone was catching fire. Hildebrandt describes vividly how in an industrial town in Saxony the people rose in their might and took the local government into their own hands. We watch the mob in action brutally beating to death a Communist agent of the secret police and liberating the prisoners from the jails. Some of these events in the zone took place spontaneously, independently of Berlin, but as word spread of what was

happening in the capital the movement became widespread. This was the effect of the news broadcasts of RIAS, the American radio station in Berlin.

Hildebrandt highlights the dilemma of American policy in his story of the RIAS news editor whose scripts spurred his listeners in the zone to action but who was ordered not to use the American transmitter to send out a call for a general strike. While Hildebrandt generally keeps to straight reporting, his implied criticism of the Americans is clear. He is echoing a frequently heard criticism that the West failed to seize the opportunity to support the movement. Joseph Scholmer, who saw the impact of the news as a prisoner in the slave-labor camp of Vorkuta in the Soviet Arctic, suggests that if the West had helped the East Germans to keep up their resistance for a week longer, a strike against Communist governments would have spread throughout eastern Europe.[1] One can understand the mixed sentiments of hope and despair which news of the uprising must have inspired behind the barbed wire, but any American intervention would have meant a serious risk of war.

On the second day of the affair the Russians moved to extricate their puppet government from its extremity. Martial law was declared and Soviet tanks were moved into the centers of disaffection. They did not fire upon the people, as has been believed, but had orders to withhold fire despite all provocation. The widely publicized newsphoto of the youths throwing rocks against the tank in Berlin, which adorns the dust-jacket of this book, has been just as widely misinterpreted. While this gesture truly symbolized the courage of the individual in the face of impersonal armed might, the fact remains that despite such assaults, which in some cases did physical damage to the tanks, the Russian soldiers held their fire.

We can only speculate as to the reasons for this restraint. One reason emerges from Hildebrandt's story of the Soviet lieutenant who showed sympathy for the striking workers and was later court-martialled and shot. There were others like him, and the Soviet command may well have feared the effect upon their own troops of an order to fire on the people. More important reasons lie deep in the mysteries of Kremlin politics. Stalin had died only two months before and his heirs seem to lack his ruthlessness if not his resolution. Their hesitation in suppressing the strike at Vorkuta in July also suggests such a conclusion. One might even credit the Kremlin leaders with some wisdom in abstaining from the violent measures which their doctrines prepare them to take against any opposition. For their restraint actually paid off. While the puppet government emerged from the fray held in contempt even more than hated by the population, the

[1] Joseph Scholmer, *Vorkuta* (Holt, 1955), pp. 224-229.

Red soldiers won a measure of respect by demonstrating a discipline which Germans who remembered 1945 had felt was not in their make-up. Incredible as it may seem, in the summer of 1953, while in Berlin, I heard friendly comments about the Red Army!

The display of Soviet force brought the uprising to an end and inaugurated a series of arrests and executions of its leaders who were condemned as "lackeys of the west" and "imperialist spies and saboteurs." In the immediate aftermath of the affair all the blame was not placed upon the West, but the Communist leaders themselves, in a revealing show of "self-criticism," admitted that they failed to keep in touch with the workers. They declared that in the future the Party would turn its face toward the working class. ("What have they been turning so far? Their backsides?" was the comment of a slave-laborer in Vorkuta when this was read out from *Pravda*.)

The regime's ignorance of the real attitude of the workers seems the only explanation of the government's measures which precipitated the uprising. In the weeks before June 16 the government had been following a policy announced as a "new course." Important concessions were made to dissident groups such as the church, the farmers, and the university students. The workers, however, were asked for greater sacrifices in the declaration of the higher work norms. The government must have really believed that the workers, so favored by other legislation, supported it.

If the government leaders were thus prisoners of their own propaganda, the uprising must have come as a rude shock. It showed that the workers as well as the rest of the population were, in the words of an East German friend of mine who took no part in the movement, "simply fed up." Informed estimates in Berlin in 1953 held that the government could count on ten per cent of the population for support and perhaps another ten per cent as not opposed. But can this percentage change with time if German unification continues to be postponed and the present government remains in control? There are those Germans who fear that vital statistics may be on the side of the Communists, for every oldster who dies is one dissenter less, while every new baby is another candidate for indoctrination. "We need twenty-five to thirty years," said an East German official in 1951, "to produce in Germany the Soviet *Planmensch*—man according to the Soviet plan."

Everywhere east of the Iron Curtain the official assumption about human nature is the same: man is completely malleable, and if the government takes the process in hand at the very beginning, he can be molded into the ferociously active extravert which the ideology demands, continually engaged in conspicuous production and dialectical thinking. (To think dialectically

means to be able to see only the happy future in the drab present.) Stalin's visage used to be displayed in maternity wards, presumably to wield a beneficient prenatal influence there. The school system has been modelled on the Soviet pattern, and East German youngsters are made to swear eternal friendship to the Soviet Union in theatrically-staged mass demonstrations à la Goebbels. Always the individual must act in groups, from the leaf-gathering collectives in the kindergartens to the "seminars" of activist students in the universities with their secretaries appointed by the Party. Lenin's slogan, "*Lernen, lernen, lernen,*" is to be seen everywhere; but to learn is not necessarily to think, let alone to think for oneself, which can be positively anti-social. Refugees from East Germany report that what is hardest to bear is the *Politisierung* or "politicalization" of life.

The events of June, 1953, indicate that something has gone wrong with this plan to produce Soviet man German style. Hildebrandt reports the words of the teacher Fiebelkorn to the crowd of strikers:

> As a teacher I had to fight daily to keep our youth from being raised in materialism, from being made mental robots. But that this youth would not let itself be blinded, would not let itself be violated—that it stands here today in such numbers and with such enthusiasm—by this token we know that they cannot kill the human soul!

Herein, then, may lie the deepest meaning of the "explosion," its demonstration that the Communist teachings about human nature may be false.

IRWIN ABRAMS

Antioch College

LITERARY WHAT-IS-IT

The Exurbanites. By A. C. Spectorsky. Lippincott, 1955. $3.95.

With nonfiction pushing the novel off the best-seller lists, we find some interesting parallels between successful books of today and of past decades. People now read the memoirs of real kings, princesses, and assorted ex-royalty where they formerly read about Graustark and Zenda. They have forsaken the fictions of Kipling's Khyber Pass for the realities of Himalayan mountain climbing. They find that tribulations of romantic heroes and heroines pale alongside the confessions of alcoholics, dope addicts, and other public figures. And the fields once so successfully cultivated by Sinclair Lewis, J. P. Marquand, and Jane Austen are now being worked by a group of writers headed by Russell Lynes.

A. C. Spectorsky is the latest entrant in this last-named field of

writing. He has learned the form well, and indeed, now that enough has been published to give shape to the area, even a dispassionate outsider can begin to outline the general rules of the game.

The first step is to pick for study a specific social group—as Lewis picked the small town, the medical profession, the travelling American. In the new nonfiction treatment, this may be a business-economic group, as in W. H. Whyte's *Is Anybody Listening?*; a social group, as in Russell Lynes' various studies of snobbery and style; or, as in A. C. Spectorsky's book, a geographical-social group, the "exurbanites" who live in the outer arc stretching around New York City from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Fairfield County, Connecticut. There are many other groups to be studied, and we shall doubtless be hearing about them shortly. In choosing a group for such a study, however, it is well for any writer going into this field to pick a group in the higher brackets of income and social status. The higher they are, the better they sell—not only to the subjects themselves but to the larger mass of frustrated aspirants to those greener brackets.

The writing style should be witty and satirical (again Lewis can point the way). It is considered bad form to allow any tone of amused tolerance to creep in, though permissible is a certain pity for those people who think they are living well or effectively or happily but we know better. Generally, however, the tone is aggressively inconoclastic and the society is vivisected with a meat axe rather than a scalpel. This also makes it easy to overlook any inconvenient details which might mar the thesis.

Finally, the book should be referred to, in some context or other, as sociology. It isn't sociology, of course. For one thing, these books are written in very good English and make entertaining reading. For another, these studies are subjective to a degree deemed heretical by the American Sociological Association—in fact, many of them sound like autobiographies with only the central character omitted. And these books are not weighed down with the charts and statistical tables so dear to the sociologist. Instead, they have excellent cartoons by Robert Osborn. (Presumably other artists could also illustrate these books, but so far Osborn seems to have the field to himself.) To refer to these diatribes as sociological studies, however, gives to them an aura of scholarship and to the reader a feeling of cultural superiority to readers of mere fiction.

Will the social novel ever make a comeback? —P. H. R.

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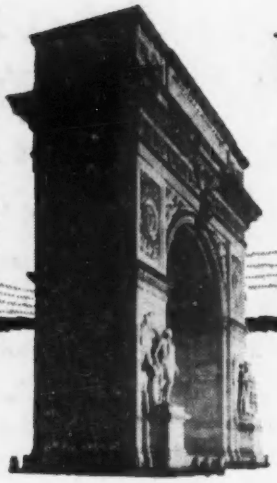

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